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Once Upon a Time

Charles Knight, Hen's Tooth Video (Firm





4/11

48

John Frederick Maul

from his affectionate friend

Robert. C. L. Reade -

on his leaving Eton -

Easter. 1867 -

ONCE UPON A TIME.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER: A VIEW of the PRODUCTIVE FORCES
of MODERN SOCIETY, and the RESULTS of LABOUR, CAPITAL, and
SKILL. *2nd Edition*, with additional Woodcuts. Post 8vo., 7s. 6d.

II.

THE OLD PRINTER & THE MODERN PRESS. Fcap. 8vo., 5s.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET.

ONCE UPON A TIME.

BY CHARLES KNIGHT.

"The old bees die, the young possess their hive."

; SHAKSPERE: *Lucrece*.

SECOND EDITION.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS WOODCUTS.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1859.

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TO

HENRY, LORD BROUGHAM,

THE UNWEARIED ADVOCATE OF PROGRESS,

THESE SKETCHES

**OF SOME OF THE STAGES OF TRANSITION FROM THE PAST
TO THE PRESENT**

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

SOME of the pieces in this volume have been printed before, chiefly in periodical works. Many are new. The articles in this edition entitled 'The Chapel,' and 'The Beginnings of Popular Literature,'—are portions of my volume entitled 'The Old Printer and the Modern Press.' The various papers are here presented, as far as the nature of the subjects will admit, in a chronological succession. This arrangement has involved many alterations in some of the republished articles.

It is scarcely necessary to indicate the several publications in which a portion of these slight things have previously appeared, except to say that some of the shorter pieces have had the advantage of the popularity of Mr. Dickens' 'Household Words.'

The Title, 'Once upon a Time,' which, as the commencement of 'Old Wives' Tales,' lingers in our childish memories, may suggest something of the un-

pretending nature of these Sketches. I think they are not untrue representations of other states of society ; but they have no pretensions to the completeness which History, even domestic History, demands. They are Glimpses of the Past. Yet as such they may have some value beyond that of amusing a vacant hour. The Past is a solemn word :—

‘ The Past,
Big with deep warnings of the proper tenure
By which thou hast the earth : the Present for thee
Shall have distinct and trembling beauty, seen
Beside that Past’s own shade.’

BROWNING, *Paracelsus*.

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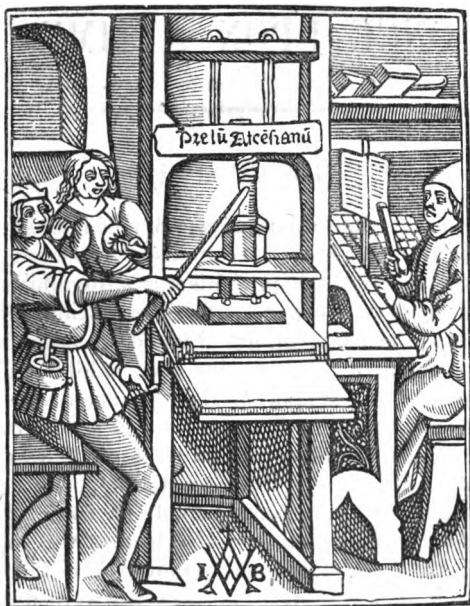
ONCE UPON A TIME.

THE CHAPEL.

IT was evensong time when, after a day of listlessness, the printers in the Almonry at Westminster prepared to close the doors of their workshop. This was a tolerably spacious room, with a carved oaken roof. The setting sun shone brightly into the chamber, and lighted up such furniture as no other room in London could then exhibit. Between the columns which supported the roof stood two presses—ponderous machines. A *form* of types lay unread upon the *table* of one of these presses; the other was empty. There were *cases* ranged between the opposite columns; but there was no *copy* suspended ready for the compositors to proceed with in the morning. No heap of wet paper was piled upon the floor. The *balls*, removed from the presses, were rotting in a corner. The *ink-blocks* were dusty, and a thin film had formed over the oily pigment. He who had set these machines in motion, and filled the whole space with the activity of mind, was dead. His daily work was ended.

Three grave-looking men, decently clothed in black, were girding on their swords. Their caps were in their hands. The door opened, and the chief of the workmen came in. It was Wynkyn de Worde. With short speech, but with looks of deep significance, he called a *chapel*—the printer's parliament—a conclave as solemn and as omnipotent as the Saxons' Witenagemot. Wynkyn was the Father of the Chapel.

The four drew their high stools round the *imposing-stone*—those stools on which they had sat through many a day of quiet labour, steadily working to the distant end of some ponderous folio, without hurry or anxiety. Upon the stone



Ancient Press.

lay two uncorrected folio pages—a portion of the ‘Lives of the Fathers.’ The *proof* was not returned. He that they had followed a few days before to his grave in St. Margaret’s church had lifted it once back to his failing eyes,—and then they closed in night.

‘Companions,’ said Wynkyn—(surely that word ‘*companions*’ tells of the antiquity of printing, and of the old love and fellowship that subsisted amongst its craft)—‘companions, the good work will not stop.’

‘Wynkyn,’ said Richard Pynson, ‘who is to carry on the work?’

‘I am ready,’ answered Wynkyn.

A faint expression of joy rose to the lips of these honest men, but it was damped by the remembrance of him they had lost.

‘He died,’ said Wynkyn, ‘as he lived. The Lives of the Holy Fathers is finished, as far as the translator’s labour. There is the rest of the copy. Read the words of the last page, which I have written :—

‘Thus endeth the most virtuous history of the devout and right-renowned lives of holy fathers living in desert, worthy of remembrance to all well-disposed persons, which hath been translated out of French into English by William Caxton, of Westminster, late dead, and finished at the last day of his life.’*

The tears were in all their eyes; and ‘God rest his soul!’ was whispered around,

‘Companion,’ said William Machlinia, ‘is not this a hazardous enterprise?’

‘I have encouragement,’ replied Wynkyn; ‘the Lady Margaret, his Highness’ mother, gives me aid. So droop not, fear not. We will carry on the work briskly in our good master’s house.—So fill the case.’†

A shout almost mounted to the roof.

‘But why should we fear? You, Machlinia, you, Lettou, and you, dear Richard Pynson, if you choose not to abide with your old companion here, there is work for you all in these good towns of Westminster, London, and Southwark. You have money; you know where to buy types. Printing *must* go forward.’

‘Always full of heart,’ said Pynson. ‘But you forget the statute of King Richard; we cannot say “God rest his soul,” for our old master scarcely ever forgave him putting Lord Rivers to death. You forget the statute. We ought to know it, for we printed it. I can turn to the file in a

* These are the words with which this book closes.

† ‘Wynkyn de Worde this hath set in print,

In William Caxton’s house :—so fill the case.’

Stanzas to ‘*Scala Perfectionis*,’ 1494.

moment. It is the Act touching the merchants of Italy, which forbids them selling their wares in this realm. Here it is:—"Provided always that this Act, or any part thereof, in nowise extend or be prejudicial of any let, hurt, or impediment to any artificer or merchant stranger, of what nation or country he be or shall be of, for bringing into this realm, or selling by retail or otherwise, of any manner of books written or imprinted." Can we stand up against that, if we have more presses than the old press of the Abbey of Westminster?

'Ay, truly, we can, good friend,' briskly answered Wynkyn. 'Have we any books in our stores? Could we ever print books fast enough? Are there not readers rising up on all sides? Do we depend upon the court? The mercers and the drapers, the grocers and the spicers of the city, crowd here for our books. The rude uplandish men even take our books; they that our good master rather vilipended. The tapsters and taverners have our books. The whole country-side cries out for our ballads and our Robin Hood stories; and, to say the truth, the citizen's wife is as much taken with our King Arthurs and King Blanchardines as the most noble knight that Master Caxton ever desired to look upon in his green days of jousts in Burgundy. So fill the case.*

'But if foreigners bring books into England,' said cautious William Machlinia, 'there will be more books than readers.'

'Books make readers,' rejoined Wynkyn. 'Do you remember how timidly even our bold master went on before he was safe in his sell? Do you forget how he asked this lord to take a copy, and that knight to give him something in fee; and how he bargained for his summer venison and his winter venison, as an encouragement in his ventures? But he found a larger market than he ever counted upon, and so shall we all. Go ye forth, my brave fellows. Stay

* To "fill the case" is to put fresh types in the case, ready to arrange in new pages. The bibliographers scarcely understood the technical expression of honest Wynkyn.

not to work for me, if you can work better for yourselves. I fear no rivals.'

'Why, Wynkyn,' interposed Pynson, 'you talk as if printing were as necessary as air; books as food, or clothing, or fire.'

'And so they will be some day. What is to stop the want of books? Will one man have the command of books, and another desire them not? The time may come when every man shall require books.'

'Perhaps,' said Lettou, who had an eye to printing the Statutes, 'the time may come when every man shall want to read an Act of Parliament, instead of the few lawyers who buy our Acts now.'

'Hardly so,' grunted Wynkyn.

'Or perchance you think that, when our sovereign liege meets his Peers and Commons in Parliament, it were well to print a book some month or two after, to tell what the said Parliament said, as well as ordained?'

'Nay, nay, you run me hard,' said Wynkyn.

'And if within a month, why not within a day? Why shouldn't we print the words as fast as they are spoken? We only want fairy fingers to pick up our types, and presses that Doctor Faustus and his devils may some day make, to tell all London to-morrow morning what is done this morning in the palace at Westminster.'

'Prithee, be serious,' ejaculated Wynkyn. 'Why do you talk such gallymaufry? I was speaking of possible things; and I really think the day may come when one person in a thousand may read books and buy books, and we shall have a trade almost as good as that of armourers and fletchers.'

'The Bible!' exclaimed Pynson; 'O that we might print the Bible! I know of a copy of Wickliffe's Bible. That were indeed a book to print!'

'I have no doubt, Richard,' replied Wynkyn, 'that the happy time may come when a Bible shall be chained in every church, for every Christian man to look upon. You remember when our brother Hunte showed us the chained

books in the library at Oxford. So a century or two hence a Bible may be found in every parish. Twelve thousand parishes in England! We should want more paper in that good day, Master Richard.'

'You had better fancy at once,' said Letton, 'that every housekeeper will want a Bible! Heaven save the mark, how some men's imaginations run away with them!'

'I cannot see,' interposed Machlinia, 'how we can venture upon more presses in London. Here are two. They have been worked well since the day when they were shipped at Cologne. Here are five good founts of type, as much as a thousand weight—*Great Primer*, *Double Pica*, *Pica*—a large and a small face, and *Long Primer*. They have well worked; they are pretty nigh worn out. What man would risk such an adventure, after our good old master? He was a favourite at court and in cloister. He was well patronized. Who is to patronize us?'

'The people, I tell you,' exclaimed Wynkyn. 'The babe in the cradle wants an Absey-book; the maid at her distaff wants a ballad; the priest wants his Pie; the young lover wants a romance of chivalry to read to his mistress; the lawyer wants his Statutes; the scholar wants his Virgil and Cicero. They will all want more the more they are supplied. How many in England have a book at all, think you? Let us make books cheaper by printing more of them at once. The churchwardens of St. Margaret's asked me six-and-eightpence yesterday for the volume that our master left the parish;* for not a copy can I get, if we should want to print again. Six-and-eightpence? That was exactly what he charged his customers for the volume. Print five hundred instead of two hundred, and we could sell it for three-and-fourpence.'

'And ruin ourselves,' said Machlinia. 'Master Wynkyn, I shall fear to work for you if you go on so madly. What has turned your head?'

* There is a record in the parish books of St. Margaret's of the churchwardens selling for 6s. 8d. one of the books bequeathed to the church by William Caxton.

‘Hearken,’ said Wynkyn. ‘The day our good master was buried I had no stomach for my home. I could not eat. I could scarcely look on the sunshine. There was a chill at my heart. I took the key of our office, for you all were absent, and I came here in the deep twilight. I sat down in Master Caxton’s chair. I sat till I fancied I saw him moving about, as he was wont to move, in his furred gown, explaining this copy to one of us, and shaking his head at that proof to the other. I fell asleep. Then I dreamed a dream, a wild dream, but one that seems to have given me hope and courage. There I sat, in the old desk at the head of this room, straining my eyes at the old proofs. The room gradually expanded. The four *frames* went on multiplying, till they became innumerable. I saw *case* piled upon *case*; and *form* side by side with *form*. All was bustle, and yet quiet, in that room. Readers passed to and fro; there was a glare of many lights; all seemed employed in producing one folio, an enormous folio. In an instant the room had changed. I heard a noise as of many wheels. I saw sheets of paper covered with ink as quickly as I pick up this type. Sheet upon sheet, hundreds of sheets, thousands of sheets, came from forth the wheels—flowing in unstained, like corn from the hopper, and coming out printed, like flour to the sack. They flew abroad as if carried over the earth by the winds. Again the scene changed. In a cottage, an artificer’s cottage, though it had many things in it which belong to princes’ palaces, I saw a man lay down his basket of tools and take up one of these sheets. He read it; he laughed, he looked angry; tears rose to his eyes; and then he read aloud to his wife and children. I asked him to show me the sheet. It was wet; it contained as many types as our “Mirror of the World.” But it bore the date of 1844. I looked around, and I saw shelves of books against that cottage wall—large volumes and small volumes; and a boy opened one of the large volumes and showed me numberless block-cuts; and the artificer and his wife, and his children gathered round me, all looking with glee towards their

books, and the good man pointed to an inscription on his bookshelves, and I read these words,

MY LIBRARY A DUKEDOM.

I woke in haste; and, whether awake or dreaming I know not, my master stood beside me, and smilingly exclaimed, "This is my fruit." I have encouragement in this dream.'

'Friend Wynkyn,' said Pynson, 'these are distempered visions. The press may go forward; I think it will go forward. But I am of the belief that the press will never work but for the great and the learned, to any purpose of profit to the printer. How can we ever hope to send our wares abroad? We may hawk our ballads and our merry jests through London; but the citizens are too busy to heed them, and the apprentices and serving men are too poor to buy them. To the country we cannot send them. Good lack, imagine the poor pedler tramping with a pack of books to Bristol or Winchester! Before he could reach either city through our wild roads, he would have his throat cut or be starved. Master Wynkyn, we shall always have a narrow market till the king mends his highways, and that will never be.'

'I am rather for trying, Master Wynkyn,' said Lettou, 'some good cutting jest against our friends in the Abbey, such as Dan Chaucer expounded touching the friars. That would sell in these precincts.'

'Hush!' exclaimed Wynkyn: 'the good fathers are our friends; and though some murmur against them, we might have worse masters.'

'I wish they would let us print the Bible, though,' ejaculated Pynson.

'The time will come, and that right soon,' exclaimed the hopeful Wynkyn.

'So be it,' said they one and all.

'But what fair sheet of paper is that in your hand, good Wynkyn?' said Pynson.

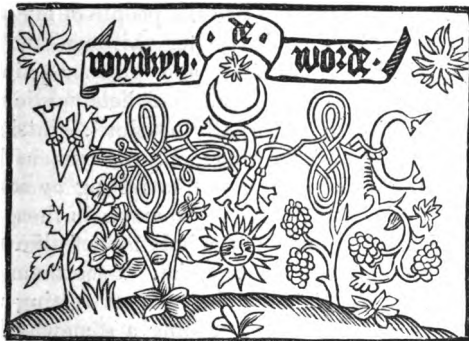
'Master Richard, we are all moving onward. This is English-made paper. Is it not better than the brown thick paper we have had from over the sea? How *he* would

have rejoiced in this accomplishment of John Tate's long-ing trials! Ay, Master Richard, this fair sheet was made in the new mill at Hertford; and well am I minded to use it in our Bartholomæus, which I shall straightly put in hand, when the Formschneider is ready. I have thought anent it; I have resolved on it; and I have indited some rude verses touching the matter, simple person as I am:—

- ‘For in this world to reckon every thing
Pleasure to man, there is none comparable
As is to read and understanding
In books of wisdom—they ben so delectable,
Which sound to virtue, and ben profitable;
And eld that love such virtue ben full glad
Books to renew, and cause them to be made.
- ‘And also of your charity call to remembrance
The soul of Wiliam Caxton, first printer of this book
In Latin tongue at Cologne, himself to advance,
That every well-disposed man may thereon look:
And John Tate the younger joy mote [may] he brook,
Which hath late in England made this paper thin,
That now in our English this book is printed in.’

‘Fairly rhymed, Wynkyn,’ said Lettou. ‘But John Tate the younger is a bold fellow. Of a surety England can never support a Paper-mill of its own.’

‘Come, to business,’ said William of Mechlin.



Mark of Wynkyn de Worde.*

* He always in these marks, associated the device of Caxton with his own; glorying, as he well might, in succeeding to the business of his honoured master, and continuing for so many years the good work which he had begun.



Caister Castle.

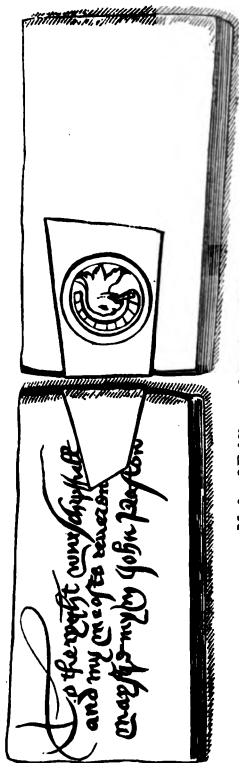
THE PASTONS.

I HAVE a great affection for the Pastons. They are the only people of the old time who have allowed me to know them thoroughly. I am intimate with all their domestic concerns—their wooings, their marriages, their household economies. I see them, as I see the people of my own day, fighting a never-ending battle for shillings and pence; spending lavishly at one time, and pinched painfully at another. I see them, too, carrying on their public relations after a fashion that is not wholly obsolete;—intriguing at elections, bribing and feasting. I see them, as becomes constitutional Englishmen, ever quarrelling by action and writ; and, what is not quite so common in these less adventurous times, employing ‘the holy law of pike and gun’ to support the other law, or to resist. I see them, in their pride of family, despising trade and yet resting upon its assistance. I see the ladies leading a somewhat unquiet and constrained life till they have become comfortable in the matter of marriage; and I see the young gentlemen taking a strict inventory of the amount of ready cash that is to be paid down with a bride, and deciding upon eligi-

bility by this simple rule of the scales. This is all very edifying; and I am truly obliged to this gracious family, who, four hundred years ago, communicated with each other and with their friends, in the most frank manner, upon every subject of their varied lives.

The Paston Letters * carry us through three generations who lived during the turbulent period of the Wars of the Roses. The first generation makes us acquainted with Sir William Paston, a judge of the Common Pleas, and his wife Agnes. This is a wonderful woman. We see her, at the very opening of the correspondence, scheming for the marriage of her sons, and holding her daughters in terrible durance. The judge passes on to that assize where no more '*fur sit on the bench and latro stand at the bar.*' But then comes on the scene, John Paston, his elder son; and he, for a quarter of a century, dwelling now in the Inner Temple and now in Norwich, is carrying on a fight about disputed titles to broad lands in Norfolk and Suffolk, whilst his wife Margaret is writing him little tender remembrances of her affection, or warning him against his enemies, or opening to the worldly man in London quiet glimpses of boys wanting new

clothes, and girls growing up to be troublesome in the fancy that a little love is necessary to their existence. The old grandmother Agnes is still busy amongst them. Then



Mode of Folding and Sealing a Letter.

* Original Letters written during the Reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., and Richard III.; with Notes, by John Fenn, Esq. A new edition, by A. Ramsay, 2 vols., 1840.

John Paston of the Inner Temple passes away, and his gallant son, Sir John Paston, comes upon the stage. He is of a gay and fearless nature, winning ladye's love at tournament, or dance, but a very restless spirit who has some secret affection which interferes with his certain advancement if he would be prudent and marry after the court fashion. He has need of friends, but Sir John throws them away very recklessly; and so the great enemy of the House of Paston, the Duke of Norfolk, gets the upper hand, and beleaguers their castle of Caister with a thousand men, and takes hold of the fortress and its lands in a summary way, well known to the old barons and knights as 'disseisin,' and which the petty modern ages imperfectly copied when the landlord unroofed a cottage to eject his refractory tenant.

* This latter story of the Pastons is a great romance.

Margaret Paston, the mother, is the heroine of 'this strange eventful history,' after she became a widow in 1466. She is a person of prodigious energy, and she has need of it to cope with the difficulties by which she is surrounded. She is troubled by the course of politics as well as by that of law. Sir John, the gay soldier, however ready to better his fortune in the sunshine of court favour, is not very particular whether it be the 'sun of York' or of Lancaster. Her second son, also John, who is called John of Gelston, a curious specimen of the gallant of those days, who wears his new hat and looks out for a new love with equal indifference, cannot keep out of trouble when swords are flashing all around him. The story of the daughter Margery is a rare exception to the ordinary passages of gentle damsels in those times. It is a tale of true love. There is a younger son at Eton; and through him we learn a little of the school-life of the fifteenth century; and another at Oxford, who is destined for the church, but dies young. But whether we see the lady mother and her sons in the Norwich of friars and worsted-spinners, with now and then a noble or even a king glittering amongst the citizens—or at their castle of Caister, a moated fortress some two miles from Yarmouth, where there is a rude

garrison ever looking out—we always see them under some aspect of danger and difficulty, and yet putting a brave face upon their perils, and keeping a great calm amidst their hopes. These poor Pastons had an unquiet time of it; and this gives a more than common interest to their annals—for their Letters *are* Annals—as trustworthy and as interesting as any records that have aspired to the dignity of History.

When Dame Margaret Paston was a fair young maiden, and John Paston came a-wooing, ‘she made him gentle cheer in gentle wise.’ To the grave Sir William Paston, judge of the Common Pleas, his wife Agnes writes thus of the ‘gentlewoman’ whom John made ‘treaty’ with, being in good-humour at the coming alliance:—‘The parson of Stockton told me if ye would buy her a gown, her mother would give thereto a goodly fur; the gown needeth for to be had, and of colour it would be a goodly blue, or else a bright sanguine.’ Silk gowns were not come at so cheaply in those days as now; and the judge of the Common



Female Costume in the time of Henry VI.

Pleas might have taken time to pause before he committed

himself to the Howell and James of Cheapside for fifteen yards of damask at seven shillings a-yard. But surely Margaret Mauteby got her silk gown. It was, we have no doubt, the 'bright sanguine.' In 1443 she is a wife and mother; and her husband has been sick in the Inner Temple while she is in the country: and her heart is overflowing with tenderness; and she has sent four nobles to the four orders of friars at Norwich to pray for him; and she has vowed to go on pilgrimage to Walsingham; and she would rather have him at home 'than a new gown, though it were of scarlet.' Dear young Margaret! But Margaret, when a wife of twelve years, has a loving request to prefer to her husband: 'I pray you that ye will do your cost on me against Whitsuntide, that I may have something for my neck. When the Queen was here I borrowed my cousin Elizabeth Clere's device, for I durst not for shame go with my beads amongst so many fresh gentlewomen as here were at that time.' Margaret of Anjou was at Norwich in 1452, saying gracious things to the gentry—for Richard of York was in arms,—and she sent for Elizabeth Clere, and 'made right much of her and desired her to have an husband.' Yet Margaret Paston thinks of more substantial matters than neck-devices:—'Right worshipful husband,—I commend me to you; I pray you that ye will buy two dozen trenchers, for I can none get in this town' (Norwich). Yet with all her care the anxious wife cannot wholly please her absent husband, and she writes, 'I recommend me to you, beseeching you that ye be not displeased with me, though my simpleness caused you to be displeased with me.' A few years onward Margaret is imbued with the unquiet spirit of the times; and though she begs her husband to buy her a pound of sugar and a pound of almonds, and 'some frieze to make of your children's gowns,' she also desires he would get some cross-bows and windlasses and quarrels, 'for your houses here be so low that there may none man shoot out with no long-bow, though we had never so much need.' At one time Margaret held the Manor-house of Heylesden against my Lord of Suffolk, with guns and ordnance. Just

before that bold march upon London which gave the throne to Edward, and sent Henry to the Tower, there is a letter from Margaret Paston to her husband, 'Written in haste, the second Sunday in Lent, by candlelight at even ;' and she warns him to be 'more wary of your guiding for your person's safeguard, and also that ye be not too hasty to come into this country till ye hear the world is more sure.' What a world to live in ! The poor 'Bezonian' had to 'speak or die' for a weak Henry or a profligate Edward. He had to fight for a doubtful inheritance, with cross-bow and quarrel ; to make forcible entries, or hold possession by writ and sword. His agent writes to him about a cause that 'hath been called on as diligently and hastily this term as it might be, and alway days given them by the court to answer ; and then they took small exceptions and trifled forth the courts ; and alway excused them because the bill is long, and his counsel had no leisure to see it ; and then prayed hearing of the testament of my master and your father, and thereof made another matter, and argued it to put them from it because they had emparled to it before ; and then Hillingworth, to drive it over this term, alleged variance betwixt the bill and the testament, that John Damme was named in the testament Joh Damme.' This was written in 1461, and we are even now, three hundred and ninety-seven years later, only upon the threshold of law-reform. What millions have been spent by the people of England in paying, not for justice, but to 'drive it over this term,' since the variance between 'John' and 'Joh' was found out by the cunning lawyers in April, 1461. What jargon has been talked, from that day to this, about tenures, remainders, perpetuities, fines and recoveries, settlements, wills, uses, trusts, leases, mortgages, possession, and all the infinite subtleties that have been given to us, as an especial blessing of Providence, to make the owners of property miserable, and to reserve something like an equality between the rich and the poor !

And so, what with writs of trespass, and suits of ejectment, John Paston became impoverished, and died suspected

and heart-broken, after confinement in the Fleet, in May, 1466. The aspects of the family in the third year of Margaret's widowhood may be shown in a slight Imaginary Scene, founded upon the letters.

It is the Wednesday before the feast of Easter, in the year 1469, in which year the great festival of the Church fell on the 2nd of April. In the dark twilight that preceded the rising of the paschal moon, a small cavalcade of jaded riders pass the little church of Caister Holy Trinity, of which there is nothing now remaining but a ruined tower. They had left Norwich at an early hour of the morning; but although the distance they had to travel was less than twenty miles, the highway was then so rotten from the rains of the season, that the progress of these riders was painfully slow. Indeed the two footmen who walk by the side of the horse which bears their mistress, and carefully attend upon her bridle-rein, scarcely make so much exertion to maintain their speed as the weary beasts who constantly stumble amongst the deep ruts. The lady is somewhat more than of the middle age; yet she rides with a firm seat, holds herself erect, and complains not of weariness, though she had tasted no food save a small manchet since she had partaken of the lenten white-herring at the breakfast time of seven. Behind the lady follows the somewhat impatient steed of a reverend priest, who, with submission be it said, does not endure the long fast quite so patiently as she of the weaker frame; and whose restlessness communicates itself to his horse through the pricking of the spur and the snatching of the bit, which occasionally manifests that he who governs the quadruped requires a small portion of self-government to endure the evils of this laborious wayfaring. The lady is the worshipful Mistress Margaret Paston, widow; the priest is her chaplain, Sir James Gloys. Behind them come two led sumpter-mules, laden with panniers and other gear, but not having to stumble under a very heavy load. The hinds who drive them

are themselves driven by an upper servant of the lady's house. The destination of the party is the fair castle of Caister. It is now a desolate place, whose halls have become ruinous farm-buildings, and whose moat is a miry pond. The weary travellers look up briskly when they see the great tower standing out in sharp relief in the twilight, rising high over the hill behind its turrets. The horses, who have pleasant recollections of stall and crib, press into a trot as they pass the church; and making a short turn, go cheerily along, till horse and foot halt at the gate of the avenue which led to the drawbridge of the western moat.

The gate is quickly opened by the footmen, who shout lustily, 'Nicholas, Nicholas, down with bridge, our lady is come.' But no Nicholas is at hand to answer; and indeed the shouting is somewhat unnecessary, for the bridge is already lowered, and the mother of the lord of Caister rides without challenge into the outer court of the goodly castle. No warder from its tower has given signal of her approach; no porter, armed to the teeth, is there to make a show of vigilance, if the reality were wanting. The dame is angered beyond measure; but she is silent. Again the footmen shout, 'Nicholas!' as they thunder with their staves against the ponderous western porch which led through a corridor to the inner court. Not a light is to be seen through window or loophole; but as the rising moon throws a glimmer upon the castle walls, a faint wreath is observed creeping up from the precincts of the kitchen, which tells that the place is not wholly deserted. The knockings are again repeated by the impatient grooms, who, despite the presence of the lady and the priest, are not sparing of oaths, which, although peculiar to the period, and as such of grave interest to resolute antiquaries, are scarcely needful to be set down by us, who aim at no profundity in our archæological gleanings. At length a lamp glimmers through a side slit in the great tower; and the yeoman of the buttery, who has charge of the sumpter-mules, advances, and with a double oath demands admission.

The owner of the voice within gives no mark to a possible enemy without; but shouts securely below the loophole, 'Mant come in, bor.' For an instant Mistress Margaret Paston feels the discomfort, and almost shame, of this exclusion from the shelter of her son's castle—the possession which the Pastons were ready to defend to the extremest issue against those who denied their right to its quiet keeping. She even thinks for a moment that Caister had been forcibly wrested from their hands; that their enemies are within its walls. But a second thought assures her that this could not have happened; for in that case a better watch would have been kept. Her own knaves had been faithless to their trust. Advancing, with the spirit that becomes her station, beneath the tower—the priest, however, wisely remaining with the grooms in the apprehension of some foe in ambush—the Paston cries out, with a voice of authority, 'Who are you, varlet, that deny your mistress entrance? Come down and unbar the door, or you shall keep your Easter in a lower chamber than you now hide in.' Again the voice shouts, 'Mant come in, bor.' The lady is incensed; the priest is cold and hungry; the yeoman of the buttery and the footmen are furious, for they had an undoubting trust that there was supper in the larder, and a fervent hope that there was wine in the cellar. The point is to find an entrance. They forthwith begin to shout for Peryn Sale, John Chapman, and Robert Jackson, men-at-arms that they thought were within the walls; but no answer comes. Nor is the cry more fortunate for Robert Jackson, John Chapman, and Peryn Sale. In whatever way the demand is varied there comes the one answer from the one voice, 'Mant come in, bor.' The lady chafes and mutters, 'Oh, that Daubeney was here to have a rule!' She suddenly bethinks her of William Penny, a soldier of Calais, lately sent to the keeping of Caister, of whom her son, Sir John Paston, had written a remarkable eulogy, purporting that he was bald, and as good a man as goeth upon the earth, saving a little—which little was that he was apt to get a little drunk. So 'William Penny' is

forthwith shouted, and the courts of Caister echo 'William Penny.' It is all in vain. Some one thinks of John Thresher, to call upon in their need; and at length a voice is heard within—'Up, James Hallman—stand to your tackling—they are over the moat; up, you drunken varlet; up, Rawlings; bills, bills, lights, lights!' The shoutings within the portal are answered by another faint shouting from an inner chamber; and now a Babel of sounds is rising in the distance, and the voice of the chief in command, William Penny the soldier of Calais, might be heard above the general uproar—'Harrow, harrow! loselly gadlings!—bacinets, halberts!' And then this great leader, rubbing his eyes, solemnly says—'Here's lachesse. Know ye not that it is written in the Ordinances for War, that every man be obeysant to his captain, to keep his watch and ward, and to do all that longeth a soldier to do? Muster! mountee! havock!' Fearful as these 'escries' are, the garrison seem not inclined for a sortie; nor, indeed, would any such inclination have availed them much, for the gates of Caister are all locked upon them. Yet those without are not wholly free from peril; and several draw close under the dark shade of a buttress, for a quarrel from a loophole might have closed a weary journey with unnecessary awkwardness for some one. A sudden relief lights upon them in the form of Nicholas the porter, who, all unconscious of the presence in which he is about to stand, comes singing up to the drawbridge, with a basket on his shoulder and a keg slung to his side. The yeoman of the buttery, his old and faithful friend, advances to meet him, as he stands irresolutely on the bridge, seeing unexpected company. 'Oh, Nicholas, Nicholas!' ejaculates the afflicted yeoman, 'what could lead you to desert your post?'

'Hunger,' stoutly answers Nicholas. 'Hunger, what has made many a bold man run afore now.'

'Hunger!' interposes Dame Margaret; 'who presumes to talk of hunger in Sir John Paston's castle of Caister? Nicholas, Nicholas, if you had not been porter of old to Sir

John Fastolf, of blessed memory ('Whom God assoil!' said the priest), I would discharge you on the spot. Let no one talk of hunger in this fair castle, as an excuse for the neglect of duty. No parley here, varlet, but give us entrance.'

'No parley here, varlet,' echoes the priest.

The unhappy porter lays down his load, and selects the largest of the keys from the bunch at his girdle. The great door creaks on its hinges; and as it gives admission to the angry visitors of the inhospitable castle, half a dozen men, who had slept on in spite of the tumult, start up from their nap on the benches of the corridor, and with one voice exclaim, 'Nicholas, have you got the herrings?'

Hunger, cold, weariness, offended dignity—all these are forgotten by the mother of the Pastons till she has provided for the security of their stronghold. During this tedious waiting she has refused to dismount from her horse; and now, riding even within the porch, she shouts with a voice of captainship for the delinquent leader of the men-at-arms, 'William Penny, come forth.' The spirit of soldiery drives out the spirit of drink; and in a moment William Penny snatches a partisan, and, lowering the point in gracious salutation, awaits the lady's commands. 'William Penny, gather your men, and up with the drawbridge.' The comrades have the word from their corporal and the feat is done. Again the point of lance is lowered, and again the lady commands—'William Penny, muster your men in the Great Hall.' The tramp of heavy shoon proclaims that they are finding their way from the portal across the inner court. The lady now dismounts from her steed; the porter and the cook have taken charge of the panniers; a torch is held by the trembling urchin who had shouted 'Mant come in, bor,' and who now keeps muttering, 'M' uncle bod me.' With the dignity of a queen, Mistress Margaret slowly paces into the hall, where William Penny and his men, with pike and cross-bow stand in serried file in the bright moonlight which gleams through the traceried windows. Sir James Gloys follows in amaze, not clearly seeing the

resources for supper; and still more amazed is he when the lady passes through the hall to the great staircase, saying, 'Gentlemen-at-arms, to your quarters; Sir James, give you good night.'

The visits which Mistress Margaret Paston made to her son's castle of Caister were not frequent; and to her they were not pleasant visits. The fair inheritance which the Pastons had obtained, under the will of Sir John Fastolf, was a doubtful blessing. Its tenure was exceedingly precarious. Claimants to this great property—'a rich jewel at need for all the country in time of war'—were there more than one; and they were each ready to take by the power of the strong arm what the law forbade them to take by any other power than the parchment missiles of the courts. The castle had within it few domestics; but their absence did not render the place lonely; for whenever a soldier, English or foreign, who was ready to fight for any cause, could be hired, Sir John Paston gave him an introduction to the spacious courts of Caister. Small inquiry was there as to the moral qualities of these hirelings. There were few moveables left in Caister to excite their cupidity; there was scarcely anything to guard but the bare walls. Sometimes John Paston, the brother of Sir John (whom we shall call, to avoid confusion, by his familiar name of John of Gelston), would take the government of these ill-disciplined forces; and as he was a bold and skilful soldier, well informed in the warlike science of his day, John of Gelston ruled these knaves with a steady hand. Sometimes John Daubeney, a trusty friend of the house, held the rule; and then also some order was preserved. In the absence of these authorities, Mistress Margaret Paston occasionally took upon her the very difficult task of governing this irregular household. She was a wise and a high-minded matron in many things; but this duty was something beyond her capacity, even in her own opinion; and she frankly confessed, 'I cannot well guide nor rule soldiers; and also they set not by a woman as they should set by a man.' But, whoever was the commander

at Caister, there was one thing essential to the rule of that small community, which is equally essential to the quiet government of the largest communities,—that the people should be fed. Now it unfortunately happened that the day which we have recorded, on which Dame Paston and her chaplain took their way from her comfortable dowry house at Norwich to her son's somewhat cheerless castle of Caister, for the purpose of distributing Maundy on the following morning to the poor and afflicted, as became the lady of a great house—this day was marked at Caister by the absence of even 'a lenten entertainment.' In most great houses of that time, and, indeed, to a later period even, in houses of earls who lived in almost kingly state, the domestics were accustomed to what were called Scrambling Days of Lent, which Bishop Percy has interpreted as 'Days when no regular meals were provided, but every one shifted and scrambled for himself as well as he could.' But in the Caister household, under the rule of the Pastons, the scrambling days were not confined to this especial season, but prevailed with little interruption throughout the year. This arrangement was not the result of any philosophical theory, such as might be derived from a logical induction that as fasting was undoubtedly good at one season, it might be equally good at all seasons; but from certain necessities which pressed heavily upon a family that, in times when private as well as public affairs were greatly disordered, had more lands than rents, and desiring many things in exchange, had not means always at hand for conducting the exchange upon principles that could alone satisfy the traders of Yarmouth and Norwich, upon whose stores the household at Caister had a somewhat precarious dependence. It happened that at this season of Lent, in the ninth year of King Edward IV., Sir John Paston had reckoned somewhat too strongly upon the powers of abstinence which were possessed by his followers at Caister; and thus it also fell out that on the day when the good Mistress Margaret arrived at the fair but ill-vic-tualled castle of her son, there was a mutiny in the garrison,

which could scarcely be considered an offence, for in truth the meal was exhausted, and so was the stock-fish; mutton was there none in the fold, nor beef in the salting-tub. The beer-barrel, however, was not quite empty; and to that and to sleep had the honest guardians of Caister addressed themselves with the utmost eagerness at the time of evensong, to find some compensation for their morning, noon, and afternoon privations. They were angry; they were rebellious. But they had the military virtue even in their sufferings—they would not leave the post they were hired to defend. Thus it was that when good old Nicholas the porter, having shared his last loaf with the men-at-arms, had given over expecting his mistress as the night drew on (he did not reckon upon the unusually bad roads), he started off for the village of East Caister, where he trusted some kind Christian might succour him with a few loaves and a keg of herrings. In making this sally he turned key upon his companions; for the beer, although not of the strongest, had deranged their brains, weak from inanition. And so the drawbridge was down, and the portal shut, when Mistress Margaret Paston came to the castle.

The feelings of the widow of John Paston, first inheritor of Caister, under this unlucky combination of circumstances, were intensely painful. She seemed degraded in the eyes of her own proper household, who lived in comparative comfort in her dower-house in Norwich. Her establishment there was simple and orderly. She had no band of military retainers to govern; she had no apprehensions of violence by day or stratagem by night. Caister was to her a perpetual anxiety. For seven years her unhappy husband had struggled to maintain his claims against the most powerful noble of the day, and even against the cupidity of the crown itself. His wife had been left in the dismantled chambers of the fair castle, whilst he was pursuing the court of Edward IV. with his petitions; and the court answered by throwing him into prison as a suspected traitor. He died, without a friend to close his eyes, in a

London inn. His family impoverished themselves still more, to bestow on the first heir of Caister a most sumptuous funeral. Three years had John Paston slept soundly under the floor of Broomholm Priory, but the possession of his castle was not one jot more secure to his son, although he had been honoured by the king, and could say with Falconbridge—

‘Well, now can I make any Joan a lady.’

Mistress Margaret felt degraded as she entered the castle without provender for its defenders. She remembered the days, happier days for her, when old Fastolf dwelt in all splendour and liberal hospitality in this, the castellated house which he had built at enormous expense. She had feasted in the Great Hall, in the bright summer season, when the gold flagons, and chargers, and standing cups, and salt-cellars, glistened in the sunny rays that came into that spacious room, through the windows rich with heraldic crimson and purple, where the columbine flower and the antelope, the badges of the house of Lancaster, shone amidst the *or* and *azure* of the Fastolf quarterings. She had sat, in the days of quiet domestic occupation, in the Winter Hall, when the bright wood fire blazed amidst the andirons, and the cloth of arras with which the walls were hung, representing all the gambols of the morris-dance, brought the thoughts of May into the gloom of December. She had knelt in the chapel, where golden candlesticks and chalices, and images of St. Michael and our Lady, sometimes appeared to have more associations with worldly pride than heavenly humility. She had slept in the Great Chamber, and the White Chamber, and the Stranger’s Chamber, all made luxurious with feather beds, and pillows of down, and coverings of arras, and cushions of silk. In those days the buttery was stored with its ‘great and huge bottles,’ its tankards and its quartlets, its napery and its trencher knives; and the kitchen was abundantly provided with its brass pots, its pike-pans, its ladles and skimmers,

its spits, its dropping-pans, and its frying-pans. Now Mistress Margaret Paston looked upon bare walls, whether in hall or chamber, in chapel or kitchen. The plate was gone, the tapestry was gone; the feather beds and the pillows had given place to hard straw mattresses; the kitchen could boast only a cauldron, a frying-pan, and a spit; the buttery had no flagons of silver, though it maintained a show of conviviality in the display of six black jacks; the cellars were empty, save that a cask or two of hard and sour ale was absolutely necessary to prevent the men-at-arms altogether deserting their dreary post. Mistress Margaret knew something of all this; but she had not been to Caister for several months, and she little expected that the allies which Sir John had sent down—‘the gentlemanly comfortable fellows,’ who had arrived in the preceding November—would have made such havoc with the white herring and the baconed herring, the salted chines and the Dutch cheeses.

Mistress Paston represses her anger, for she justly considers that honest Nicholas, who had kept the gate in the old days of abundance, when he had ale and beef without asking, to his heart's content, had scant blame for seeking in his own extremity, and to satisfy the clamour of his noisy fellow-sufferers, a supply of something to keep life and soul together in these long-continued scrambling days. Her sorrow, however, she could not suppress. To conceal it from those around her, she retires to the small and somewhat bare chamber which she reserved to her own use when sojourning at Caister. But before she seeks to bury her anxieties in sleep, she sends for her yeoman of the buttery, he who had attended on the sumpter-mules from Norwich, and, like a discreet lady as she is, affects to regret the somewhat too earnest piety of Sir John Paston, in compelling his merry men to keep such an over-strict Lent. That should be at once amended. What did the panniers contain that he had brought from Norwich for the morrow's Maundy? The careful man set forth that, humbly presuming her ladyship's age to be forty-six, he had brought

forty-six manchets of the finest bread for the alms on the morrow, and in the same way he had brought sufficient salted meat to cut into forty-six portions, each poor person receiving the same upon a treen platter. The lady proclaims that it is well; but it has occurred to her that as this was her son's household, and not her own, it would be more fitting if the almesse were regulated by her son's age, and not by hers; and so she directs that twenty-eight treen platters, with twenty-eight portions of bread and meat, should be distributed on the morrow, instead of the forty-six which had been provided. 'And so,' says the lady with a merry voice, 'let Sir James Gloys bless the remaining meat and manchets for this evening's supper, and let Nicholas keep his herrings for the morrow's breakfast. And, good William, ask Nicholas's wife to come here and be my chamberer, and let her bring me a slice of manchet, for I am somewhat weary, with a cup of red wine of which you brought a pitcher or two for Sir James.'

Mistress Margaret Paston descends from her solitary chamber, with a heavy heart, on the Maundy Thursday whose eve saw her son's retainers wanting a supper had a lucky device not suggested itself to her inventive mind. She comes into the Winter Hall, the somewhat snug room which, opening into the inner court, is sheltered from the keen east winds that blow from the neighbouring sea. The morning is raw and comfortless. She looks upon the bare walls, and thinks of the cloth of arras of the morris-dance with which they were wont to be lined. She sits down upon the hard bench, and the remembrance of the great fringed chairs that once combined all the requisites of state and comfort are present to her memory. She gazes upon the wide chimney, and recollects the polished andirons richly ornamented (it may be) with

'Two winking Cupids
Of silver, each on one foot standing;'

and she sighs when she sees, as she had often seen before, that they are supplanted by two coarse uprights of undeco-

rated and rusty iron. These are small matters, but they tell a tale. The real present evil is, that there is no fire on the hearth, and no attendant appears to procure one. She sits down and muses. Early rising is not a custom now in the household of Caister; for it has been found by experience that sleep is an abater of those cravings of the inner man which are most imperative in exercise and action. At length the wife of Nicholas appears; and as fuel is not so scarce as salt beef, humbly suggests that her ladyship would be the better of a fire. Her ladyship assents. In due time her own yeoman of the buttery presents himself with two of the portions of meat and manchet which he has rescued from the eighteen that had been somewhat hastily dedicated to secular uses. A napery is laid over the rough oak table, and Sir James Gloys is duly informed that breakfast is ready. A leathern bottle, or black jack, of sour ale graces one end of the board; fortunate is it that something remains of a pitcher of red wine, which stands invitingly at the other.

Sir James Gloys, after a short matins, sits down to his frugal meal in a state of great abstraction. We are not exactly sure that his meditations are heavenward; for, in truth, he has been considerably discomposed by the events of the preceding evening, and by the prospects which he sees before him of little difference between the fasts of Lent and the feasts of Easter while he remains at Caister.

After an expressive silence, which in some degree reveals the struggle of pride which is passing in the breast of one, and of half-blighted hopes in that of the other, Sir James at length finds relief in the observation that the court is fast filling with the poor people who are come, according to annual custom, to claim the Maundy. Nicholas, the porter, knows by experience that the drawbridge should be lowered on this occasion; that there would be almsgiving in the hall and prayers in the chapel. He has seen, too, the chaplains of his old master assist him in washing the feet of the poor in all humility; and so, being the chief in command of the household, he reverently enters to inquire

whether his mistress, as the season was very cold, would not prefer that the water with which the ceremony would be performed should be temperately heated. The lady refers the question to the priest.

‘With all reverence, worshipful lady,’ says the chaplain, ‘I humbly submit that this obsolete portion of the ceremonial may be dispensed with altogether.’

‘Obsolete, Sir James? How can you call it obsolete, when kings and queens are even at this hour preparing to imitate the humility of our Divine Master, with archbishops and bishops to assist them?’ replies the lady.

‘And for that especial reason I hold it right that we, of less degree, should in all humility not presume so closely to imitate the example of those whom the Lord hath set on high,’ responds the priest.

‘We have little to give these poor people,’ sighs out the lady, ‘except the kindness and Christian love that are manifested in this act, which acknowledges all who bear God’s image to be our fellows.’

‘The more necessity, I opine, for omitting that part of the day’s business which has no substantial blessing in it. There will be scant thanks for courtesies and humilities, when the hand is sent empty away,’ concludes Sir James.

The reverend chaplain is one of those persons with whom the world has been always filled, who hold that there is no charity but in almsgiving, and who, indeed, consider that the word charity has no other signification. Mistress Margaret knows that there is an authority which does not exactly support the opinions of the priest:—‘If I depart all my goods into meats of poor men, and I have not charity, it profiteth to me nothing. Charity is patient, it is benign.’* If the halls of Caister had been filled with abundance to feed a multitude, and if the lady and her chaplain had heaped up the baskets of every comer, and there ended, something would have been still wanting to have given happiness to those who were assembled in the great court on this Maundy Thursday. The lady has

* Wiclif’s Translation of the New Testament.

not abundance, but she has a spirit of love in her bosom, sometimes smothered, but the more ready to come forth now at a time when she is not happy, and feels more humbly than is her wont; and so she says that if the poor go unfed from the household, they should not go unblest. She proceeds to the court, and thus addresses them in a tone of real kindness.

‘Friends and neighbours!—I am come amongst you unprovided with the usual means of discharging one portion of the Christian duty which has been common in this house on this day. Before Sir John Fastolf died, at the reverend age of eighty, he distributed his Maundy to an increasing number with his increasing years. When my husband came into possession of this house, we each distributed Maundy according to our several ages, so that the poor were not worse off than before. When he died, you were reduced to the widow’s mite, for my son left me here to be his housekeeper. I am no longer equal to that duty. I dwell not among you. According to the custom of ancient time, the Maundy must be as the years of the age of the lord of the household. I grieve that some of you will return to your homes disappointed. But let us not part as if there was wrong to be remembered. Let us meet together, and offer up our prayers together, that God will bless and preserve all his children, and give them according to their several necessities. Sir James, we follow you to the chapel.’

There is disappointment, but it is only for a moment; for when did the words of sincerity and kindness ever fail, if addressed to an assembled multitude not stirred by passion or rendered sullen by real or fancied contempt? Men, women, and children follow the lady and her chaplain to the sacred place; and there prayer and thanksgiving are offered; and there, with many a passing word of considerate inquiry, of comfort to those who are afflicted, of sympathy with those who bear their lot in cheerfulness, does the matron kneel at the feet of the old and the young, and discharge her office patiently and gracefully, so as to draw

down many a tear and many a blessing. Had her hand-maidens performed the duty alone, the form of sanctimoniousness might have been present; but where would have been the spirit that unites the great and the humble in a reverent love before Him who knows no distinctions?

Thus, then, is this castle of Caister a very troublesome possession to the widow and her sons. It is the autumn of this same year 1469, and Margaret writes to Sir John: 'Your brother and his fellowship stand in great jeopardy at Caister, and lack victuals, and Daubeney and Berney be dead, and divers others greatly hurt; and they fail gunpowder and arrows, and the place is sore broken with guns of the other party.' And she calls upon Sir John to give them hasty help. But what can Sir John do? There is nothing to be accomplished without money and gunpowder; and the knight has his own necessities: 'Mother, I beseech you send me some money, for by my truth I have but ten shillings; I wot not where to have more; and moreover I have been ten times in like case, or worse, within this ten weeks.' What can the brave mother do in these straits? 'Item, as for money I could get but ten pounds upon pledges, and that is spent upon your matters here, for paying of your men that were at Caister, and other things; and I wot not where to get none, neither for surety nor for pledges; and as for mine own livelihood, I am so simply paid thereof that I fear me I shall be fain to borrow for myself, or else to break up household, or both.' Yet the good Margaret keeps a great heart amidst these troubles, and counsels her son most righteously: 'God visiteth you as it pleases Him in sundry wises: He would ye should know Him and serve Him better than ye have done before this time, and then He will send you more grace to do well in all other things; and for God's love remember it right well, and take it patiently, and thank God of his visitation; and if anything have been amiss, any otherwise than it ought to have been before this, either in pride or in lavish expenses, or in any other thing that have

offended God, amend it, and pray Him of His grace and help, and intend well to God and to your neighbours.' Is not this a noble woman? It is in adversity that such natures are matured. She has had a hard life-struggle since old Sir William gave her that silk gown thirty years ago; but there is no weeping and wringing of hands with her. She has her work to do,—and she does it, though sometimes in a stern way, with slight pity for human infirmities. Evidently her belief is that 'to be weak is miserable, doing or suffering.' Let us look upon her under another aspect—the severe mother, exhibiting the harshness of the domestic relations between parent and child, yet in her secret heart most loving. This is a Shadow of a Reality.

Young Margery Paston is sitting in the accustomed solitude of the Brown Chamber in her mother's dowry-house at Norwich. The chaplain, Sir James Gloys, has intercepted a letter addressed to Margery. The young lady is the object of constant anxiety and suspicion—watched—persecuted. Up to the age of twelve or fourteen she had seen little of her parents, but had been a welcome inmate in the family of Sir John Fastolf, at Caister; who, in his caresses of the fair girl, indulged the strong affection which old men generally feel towards a playful and endearing child. He had no children of his own, and little Margery was therefore a real solace to the ancient warrior. There was another child, a few years older than Margery, who was admitted to play, and to learn out of the same book, with the daughter of the Pastons. This was Richard Calle, the only son of an honest and painstaking man, who acted in the capacity of a steward for Sir John Fastolf, and conducted many of the complicated affairs with which the old knight amused himself in the evening of a busy life—his friends complaining of 'the yearly great damage he beareth in disbursing his money about shipping and boats, keeping a house up at Yarmouth to his great harm, and receiveth but chaffer and ware for his corns and his wools, and then must abide a long day to make money.'

Richard Calle has now grown into manhood. He is reputed to have received a goodly inheritance from his father, which he has increased by provident enterprises in trade. When the Pastons wanted money, he was once always to be applied to. But he has presumed to address his playfellow Margery with the language of affection; and though Sir John Paston had once said that, for his part, Richard Calle might have his dowerless sister and welcome, for he had always been a warm friend of the Pastons, his mother is indignant that a trader should presume to think of marrying into a gentle family; and John of Gelston, the second son, in an hour when the fortunes of the house seemed in the ascendant, has vowed that Richard Calle 'should never have my good-will for to make my sister to sell candles and mustard at Framlingham.'

Margery Paston sits in the Brown Chamber, with her bright-blue eyes dimmed with tears. She is endeavouring to forget her own sorrows by reading a tale of imaginary griefs, which for four hundred years has never been read with a tearless eye. She is at that passage of 'The Clerk's Tale' of Chaucer, where Grisildis has her infant daughter taken from her, under pretence that it is to be put to death:—

'But, at the last, to spoken she began,
And meekely she to the serjeant pray'd
(So as he was a worthy gentleman)
That she might kiss her child ere that it deid [died];
And in her barne [lap] this little child she laid
With full sad face, and 'gan the child to bliss,
And lulled it, and after 'gan it kiss.'

The door of the chamber is hastily opened, and an old servant stands before Margery with a face of affright. All in that household love the gentle maiden; and so the old man, seeing the tear in her eye, bids her be of good cheer, for though his worshipful mistress is now in a somewhat impatient humour, and demands her instant attendance in the Oaken Parlour, she is a good lady at heart, and would soon forgive any slight cause of offence.

Dame Paston has called in two allies to constitute, with herself, the tribunal that is about to sit in judgment on Margery Paston. Dame Agnes Paston, the aged mother of the late heir of Caister, sits at the table with her daughter-in-law and the priest.

Margery enters; and, in a moment, is kneeling at the feet of her mother, with the accustomed reverence of child to parent. 'Oh, minion,' says the mother, 'rise, I beseech you; it is not for such as you to kneel to a poor forlorn widow, left with few worldly goods. Mistress Calle has plenteousness all around her, and has nothing to ask of the world's gear. She has her good house at Framlingham, and her full store at Norwich. Mistress, know you the price of salted hams at this present? Are pickled herrings plenteous? We have some wool in loft, which we should not be unwilling to exchange for worsteds. How say you Mistress Dry-goods; will you deal, will you chaffer?'

'My mother, what mean you?'

'Oh, minion, you know full well my meaning. You are an alien from your family. You are betrothed to a low trader, with no gentle blood in his veins.'

'The good Sir William Paston, Knight, and whilom Judge of his Majesty's Court of the Common Pleas, would rise from his grave to save a granddaughter of his from intermarrying with mustard and candle,' quoth the ancient lady. 'Faugh! a factor!'

'And one whom I shrewdly suspect to be a heretic,' says the priest, looking earnestly at Mistress Margaret Paston.

'Oh, my mother, why am I thus persecuted?'

'Persecuted, forsooth!' responds the elder dame; 'I took other rule with my daughters; and well do I remember that when Elizabeth Clere, my niece, tried to intercede with me for her wilful cousin Mary, forasmuch as she had been "beaten once in the week or twice, and sometimes twice in a day, and had her head broke in several places," I told her that it was for warning and ensample to all

forward maidens who dared to think of love or marriage without their parents' guidance. And with the help of my worthy lord, the good Sir William Paston, Knight, and Judge of His Majesty's Court of the Common Pleas—His Majesty Henry the Sixth gave him two robes and a hundred marks yearly; and may God him preserve upon his throne——'

The priest and Mistress Margaret drown the good old lady's somewhat disloyal gratitude (seeing that the House of York is in the ascendant) by judicious clearings of the voice, as they prepare to read the intercepted letter of Richard Calle, with sundry glosses.

'Minion,' says the mother, 'know you this superscription?'

'It is a letter from my own Richard,' cries the delighted girl; 'will you give it me?'

'Assuredly not. It convicts you of being a false liar,—or it lies itself. Did you not, with the fear of close custody, and bread and water, and may be some healing stripes, before your eyes, affirm that there was no contract between the dry-goodsman and yourself?'

'Mother, I own my sin; I did affirm it, but I was wrong, and I am penitent.'

'Vile brethel!' exclaims the mother.

'She mentioned it not, even under the seal of confession,' adds the priest.

'Yes, once in the week or twice, and sometimes twice a day, and she made an excellent wife, by reason of the frequent beatings, and brought up her children accordant,' soliloquises the old lady.

'Daughter, I conjure you to hear what this vile Richard Calle sayeth to you. Tell me, that it is false—tell me that he is a bold liar, when he affirmeth that you are contracted, and you shall at once have all freedom and reasonable pleasure; but if not——'

'Mother, I listen.'

'Hear, then, what this abominable bill imports. Sir James, please to read.'

“To Mistress Margery Paston :

“Mine own lady and mistress, and before God very true wife, I, with heart full, very sorrowfully recommend me unto you, as he that cannot be merry, nor nought shall be, till it be otherwise with us than it is yet; for this life that we lead now is neither pleasure to God nor to the world, considering the great band of matrimony that is made betwixt us, and also the great love that hath been, and as I trust yet is, betwixt us, and as on my part never greater. Wherefore I beseech Almighty God comfort us as soon as it pleaseth Him; for us that ought of very right to be most together, are most asunder. Meseemeth it is a thousand years ago that I spake with you——”

Margery here bursts into a passion of tears; and her mother, almost weeping too, ejaculates, ‘My poor child!’ The priest looks at the lady somewhat spitefully, and proceeds:—

“I had liefer than all the good in the world I might be with you. Alas! alas! good lady, full little remember they what they do that keep us thus asunder. Four times in the year are they accursed that let matrimony——”

‘Accursed, are they!’ exclaims the priest. ‘Ban and anathema against us, my worshipful lady! But there are others, I wot, that the Church holds accursed; and this base mechanical be one of them, if I mistake not. Did I not once hear him say—for the varlet ever had privilege to speak in this house, when his betters held their peace—did I not hear him once say that his father had told him that he had seen the heretic priest, John Waddon, burnt at Framlingham, and that he (shame that such an unbeliever might presume to speak upon matters of the Church!) thought that the knowledge of the truth was not advanced by such terrors, and that those who lit the fires for the Lollards had no sanction in the Gospel of Christ? For mine own part, I well believe that he has seduced our daughter from her obedience by his false and damnable opinions. Mistress Margery, did he never open in your presence the book of that arch-heretic, John Wicklif, which

is called "The Book of the New Law"—the book which, in the Constitution of Archbishop Arundel, was forbidden to be read, under pain of the greater excommunication?

The maiden answers not. The priest, looking earnestly at Mistress Margaret Paston, asks her if *she* did not think that there was a possibility of such a devilish corruption having gone forward; and Mistress Margaret, her cheek colouring a deep red, and then having an ashy paleness, speaks no more for good or evil to her daughter, but quails before the priest. He has her secret. There is a treasured volume in that house, which has been carefully locked up for half a century, to be looked upon in the secret hour, when prying eyes are sleeping, and in the hour of tribulation, when careful eyes are waking. With Richard Calle, Mistress Margaret had often spoken of this book; although even to possess it was to risk a charge of 'Lollardie,' with all its penalties. The priest sees his triumph; and proceeds to make an end of as much of the letter as he chooses to read:—

"I understand, lady, ye have had as much sorrow for me as any gentlewoman hath had in the world, as would God all that sorrow that ye have had, had rested upon me, and that ye had been discharged of it; for I wis, lady, it is to me a death to hear that ye be entreated otherwise than ye ought to be; this is a painful life that we lead. I cannot live thus without it be a great displeasure to God."

'He thought not of God's displeasure when he presumed to speak of love to a daughter of the Pastons,' says the priest. 'A granddaughter of Sir William Paston, one of his Majesty's Justices,' mutters the ancient lady. Sir James continues to read the missive:—

"I suppose they deem we be not ensured together, and if they do so I marvel, for then they are not well advised, remembering the plainness that I brake to my mistress at the beginning, and I suppose by you, both; and ye did as ye ought to do of very right; and if ye have done the contrary, as I have been informed ye have done, ye did neither consciencely, nor to the pleasure of God, without ye did it for fear, and for the time, to please such as were

at that time about you; and if ye did it for this cause, it was a reasonable cause, considering the great and importable calling upon ye that ye had; and many an untrue tale was made to you of me, which, God know it, I was never guilty of." *

'And now, pretty Mistress Margery,' says Sir James, 'will you affirm that this man sayeth untruly, when he sayeth that you are ensured together? You have before said that you are not so ensured. Will you cast off your mother and your brothers to be the wife of a low factor, and a companion for idle queans and the wives of fat burghesses, instead of wedding some noble knight, who will give you a castle to dwell in, with all worship and authority? Deny the contract; there is guilt in affirming it, even if it had been made in a moment of imprudence.'

'Sir James Gloys, and you, my honoured mother,' answers the maiden, 'Richard Calle says truly, that I did not consciencely, nor to the pleasure of God, when I concealed our contract for fear, and for the time. We are betrothed; and I rejoice in the handfasting. No pain, no fear, shall ever again lead me to deny it. He is my true husband, and may I ever be to him a reverent and loving wife. For who can I love as I have loved, and do love, Richard Calle,—the companion of my childhood, the instructor of my girlhood; a true man, as brave as if he were the sturdiest of belted knights—as wise as if he were the clerkliest of learned scholars? He has abundance; he is generous. When did a Paston ask Richard Calle for aid that his hand was not open? We may not want his help just now; but if the time arrive, and assuredly it may be not far off, that hand would be again stretched out for succour. Come Richard Calle of gentle or simple, I heed not; he is my own true man, and to him is my faith plighted, for ever and aye.'

'Twice in a day, and had her head broke in several places,' grumbles the ancient dame.

* This and the preceding passages are given literally from Calle's letter in the Paston Collection.

‘Mistress Margery,’ responds the priest, ‘you must take your own course. But this is not now a matter for daughter and mother to settle between them. It must be before the Lord Bishop. In the name of Holy Church, I prohibit all intercourse by message or letter between Richard Calle and yourself. You must be in strict durance for a short season;—and then a higher than us shall decide, contract or no contract. Heaven forfend that I, or any servant of the altar, should let matrimony.’

‘My child, go to your chamber,’ whispers the subdued mother.

The Michaelmas of 1469 is nearly come. Margery Paston is still in durance at her mother’s house. Every art has been tried to make her deny the betrothal. The priest has worked upon the fears of the mother—the daughter has been studiously kept from her presence. But this state of things cannot abide. Dame Margaret thus writes to Sir John Paston: ‘I greet you well, and send you God’s blessing and mine; letting you weet that on Thursday last was, my mother and I were with my Lord of Norwich, and desired him that he would no more do in the matter touching your sister till that ye, and my brother, and others, that were executors to your father, might be here together, for they had the rule of her as well as I; and he said plainly that he had been required so often to examine her, that he might not, nor would, no longer delay it; and charged me, in pain of cursing, that she should not be deferred, but that she should appear before him the next day. And I said plainly that I would neither bring her nor send her. And then he said that he would send for her himself, and charged that she should be at her liberty to come when he sent for her.’

On the next day—it is a Friday—Margery Paston is brought into the Bishop’s Court. There, surrounded with the panoply of the Church, sits old Walter Lyhart—he that built the roof of the nave, and the screen, of Norwich Cathedral. The maiden trembles, but her spirit remains

unbroken. The bishop puts her in remembrance how she was born,—what kin and friends she has—‘And ye shall have more, young lady, if ye will be ruled and guided after them. But if ye will not, what rebuke, and loss, and shame will be yours! They will evermore forsake you, for any good, or help, or comfort that ye shall have of them. Be well advised. I have heard say that ye love one that your friends are not well pleased that ye should love. Be advised—be right well advised.’

‘I am the betrothed wife of Richard Calle. I must cleave to him for better for worse.’

‘Rehearse to me what you said to him. Let me understand if it makes matrimony.’

‘We have plighted our troth—we are handfasted. How can I repeat the words? Richard said—Oh, my lord! spare me. I am bound in my conscience, whatsoever the words were. If the very words make not sure, make it, I beseech you, surer ere I go hence.’

And then the bishop dismisses the maiden with many frowns.

Richard Calle is summoned. He briefly tells the time and place where the vows were exchanged. The bishop is bewildered. He scarcely dare hesitate to confirm the marriage. But the subtle priest is at his side, and he whispers the fearful word of ‘Lollardie.’ Then the bishop hastily breaks up the court, and says, ‘That he supposed there should be found other things against him that might cause the letting the marriage; and therefore he would not be too hasty to give sentence.’

Margery Paston stands again upon her mother’s threshold. The aged servant is weeping as he opens the door: ‘Oh, my dear young mistress! I am commanded to shut this gate against you.’ The figure of Sir James Gloys looms darkly in the hall. ‘Begone, mistress!’ he exclaims. ‘I will go to my grandmother,’ sobs out the poor girl. ‘Your grandmother banishes you for ever from her presence,’ retorts the churlish priest.

It is night. The pride and purity of the unhappy

Margery forbid her to seek the protection of her Richard. She has been watched. Exhausted and heart-broken, she gladly accepts the shelter which Roger Best offers her. That shelter becomes her prison.

Here closes the record. But what a succession of Shadows is called up by the endorsement of the letter which tells of these sorrows: '*They were after married together.*' The contract could not be dissolved.

The Pastons can struggle no longer, Caister is yielded to the Duke of Norfolk—'for lack of victuals, lack of gunpowder; men's hearts falling, and no surety of rescue.' Thus writes John of Gelston. His troubles are not yet over; for the great Duke harasses him with an appeal of murder, from the widows of two men that had been killed at the assault of the castle. But John contrives to quiet the widows, and very shortly is a favourite in the Duke's castle at Framlingham. A very singular world that of England in the fifteenth century—men, and women too, fighting to the death for house and land one day, and, when the matter is settled, lovingly embracing, the victor and the vanquished, till a new dispute sets them fighting again.

In this interval of family peace, John the younger has some important matters of his own to attend to. He has failed in a love adventure with Mistress Alice Boleyn; and so his brother is negotiating for him with Mistress Katharine Dudley. The times are unquiet; and this wooing does not prosper. For John has been at the battle of Barnet, and 'is hurt with an arrow in the right arm beneath the elbow.' But Margaret the Queen is landed in the west, and the Pastons, who have ever been Lancastrians, have still their hopes. John is in a bad plight after the victory of Edward: 'Now, I have neither meat, drink, clothes, leechcraft, nor money, but upon borrowing; and I have essayed my friends so far that they begin to fail now in my greatest need.' Up to the last, however, John is looking for 'tidings.' They come; for the battle of Tewkesbury has been fought, and

the game is up. It is pleasant to learn that this rash Paston escapes very easily; for in a fortnight after the final struggle, 'Sir Thomas Wingfield sent for me, and let me know that the king had signed my bill of pardon.' Out of the battle-field these Yorkists and Lancastrians were not a sanguinary race. When their passions were high, and their harness on, they fought without flinching—a very brave pitiless race. They did their work effectually; but that done, and a head or two upon London bridge, the lords went quietly back to their castles and the tenants to their ploughs. The world would go on in its own way, though Warwick the king-maker had fought his last fight. And so John Paston, even amidst his tribulation, writes about his hawks and his horses; and in another year is very busy about elections at Norwich. Sir John would be a knight of the shire; but my Lord of Suffolk and my Lord of Norfolk willed it otherwise; and John of Gelston was fain to dismiss his brother's friends, though he had paid nine shillings and three half-pence for their entertainment. But my Lady of Norfolk is a firm ally of Sir John; and her agent writes to the bailiff of Maldon, 'certifying you, that my said lady for her part and for such as be of her council, be most agreeable that both ye and all such as be her farmers, and tenants, and well-willers, should give your voice to a worshipful knight, and one of my lady's council, Sir John Paston.' It is very pleasant to know that, even four hundred years ago, farmers and tenants were canvassed most courteously by great duchesses; and that, although my Lords of Suffolk and Norfolk were agreed who should be knights of the shire, the burgesses of Maldon required a little coaxing even from the castle of Framlingham. Truly polite is the great lady. There is no intimidation; no threatening to dispossess tenants, or to take away custom from cheesemongers. The truth is, that the greatest in the land depended very much upon the good will of the cultivators and the traders; and though they sometimes racked them by purveyance and other devices, they had to deal with a sturdy race who knew that 'the toe of the peasant'

had come 'near the heel of the courtier.' With all the fighting that was going on up and down, the commonalty were prospering; and thus the great lady's agent, although he just hints that he is coming for rents, asks the sweet voices of the lieges in the humblest guise, praying 'that ye fail not to speed my lady's intention in this matter, as ye intend to do her as great a pleasure as if ye gave her an hundred pounds.'

John of Gelston is 'on with a new love;' albeit we are not told how he was 'off with the old.' Mistress Alice Boleyn and Mistress Katharine Dudley *exeunt*. Enter Mistress Elizabeth Eberton. His 'fantazy' inclines to this lady, even 'if Eberton would not give so much with Mistress Elizabeth his daughter as I might have with the other.' The other! John Paston, with his 'tawny-gown furred with black, and his doublet of purple satin, and doublet of black satin,' may throw his handkerchief first at



Male Costume in the time of Henry VI.

one and then at the other in a very Turk-like and irresistible fashion. John is not so nice now as when he vowed his sister should not wed 'for to sell candle and mustard

at Framlingham.' He requests Sir John, 'ere that ye depart out of London to speak with Harry Eberton's wife, draper, and to inform her that I am proffered a marriage in London which is worth six hundred marks, and better, with whom I prayed you to commune, inasmuch as I might not tarry in London myself; always reserving that if so be that Mrs. Eberton will deal with me, that you should not conclude in the other place.' Good plain words these. We do these matters pretty much in the same spirit, but our hypocrisy will not permit us to talk of a lady-mother dealing with us. Sir John Paston has no sinecure with this matrimonial diplomacy. He is not only to commune with the draper's wife, but he is desired to 'commune with John Lee and his wife, and to understand how the matter at the Black Friars doth; and that ye will see and speak with the thing herself, and with her father and mother.' He means no harm when he calls the young lady a 'thing'—it is a pretty, endearing phrase which shows his love for six hundred marks. We presume that the 'thing' is the rival to the draper's daughter. But there is a widow in the wind. 'Also that it like you to speak to your apothecary, which was sometime the Earl of Warwick's apothecary, and to weet of him what the widow of the Black Friars is worth, and what her husband's name was—he can tell all for he is executor to the widow's husband.' John has marked the widow down, though he does not even know her name. A few months before, he was unlucky with a widow, for his brother writes to him, 'I have done my devoir to know my lady Walgrave's stomach, which, as God help me, and to be plain to you, I find in her no matter nor cause that I might take comfort of. She will in no wise receive nor keep your ring.' But there is comfort in prospect. Nothing discouraged, John now writes to his brother, 'I understand that Mistress Fitzwalter hath a sister, a maid, to marry; I trow an ye entreated him, she might come into Christian man's hands; I pray you speak with Master Fitzwalter of that matter.' She does not come into the hands of that disinterested Christian, John Paston;

for Sir John says, 'You make you surer than I deem you be, for I deem that her friends will not be content with Bedingfield's surety nor yours.' They made hard and fast bargains, these dealers in wares matrimonial. Fortune, however, is at length propitious. Dame Elizabeth Brews hath a daughter Margery; and the dame looks favourably upon John, who is Margery's cousin. Sir Thomas Brews will give a hundred pounds, and her grandfather fifty marks; and the good mother writes, 'an we accord I shall give you a great treasure, that is a witty gentlewoman, and, if I say it, both good and virtuous; for if I should take money for her I would not give her for a thousand pounds.'

This, at last, is a pretty wooing, with some heart in it, on one side at least. The lady-mother writes to John, 'Upon Friday is Saint Valentine's day, and every bird chooseth him a mate; and if it like you to come on Thursday at night, and so purvey you that you may abide there till Monday, I trust to God that ye shall so speak to mine husband; and I shall pray that we bring the matter to a conclusion.' The young lady soon came to a conclusion herself after that Valentine's day. Here is as pretty a love-letter as ever sprang from womanly tenderness, above all doubt or disguise: 'Right Reverend and Worshipful, and my right well-beloved Valentine, I recommend me unto you, full heartily desiring to hear of your welfare, which I beseech Almighty God long for to preserve unto his pleasure and your heart's desire. And if it please you to hear of my welfare, I am not in good health of body nor of heart, nor shall be till I hear from you. And my lady my mother hath laboured the matter to my father full diligently, but she can no more get than ye know of, for the which God knoweth I am full sorry. But if that ye love me, as I trust verily ye do, ye will not leave me therefore; for if that ye had not half the livelihood that ye have, for to do the greatest labour that any woman alive might, I would not forsake you.' Charming Margery Brews! What a disgrace to manhood is it that cold John Paston went on chaffering for months about the ready penny; whilst Sir

Thomas Brews would in no wise depart from the final proposal—two hundred marks, and board for three years if the married people chose to accept it. In a year they are married; and the 'Right well-beloved Valentine' is addressed by Margery as 'Right reverend and worshipful husband.' But the old trouble of the house is still hanging over them. John Paston writes in 1479, 'It is told me that Nicholas Barley, the squire, hath taken an action of debt against me this term. I pray you let Wheatly or somebody speak with him, and let him weet that if he sue me softly this term, that he shall be paid ere the next term be at an end. It is about six pounds, and in faith he should have had it ere this time, an our threshers of Swainsthorp had not died.' There was a grievous sickness in the land. John has corn in his barns. The threshers die; and Squire Barley must be asked to sue John softly till the wheat can be turned into cash. The great landed proprietors of that fifteenth century had some troubles of which their descendants of the nineteenth are happily ignorant, sorely as they have been complaining from that day to this, of their peculiar burdens and injuries. The Pastons, brave souls, fought against fortune, but they made slight moaning.

Whilst John Paston had been wooing and marrying, Caister has been recovered by the ejected family. The Duke of Norfolk dies, and Sir John Paston walks in. He is surrounded by troubles. A lawsuit starts up with 'Uncle Clement;' and there is an old suit with the Duke of Suffolk; and poor Sir John, with his castle of Caister, and his manors here and there, is in pitiful straits; and good ancient Margaret, the mother, is the depositary of his griefs, his friend and best counsellor. He has taken his gown of velvet and other gear out of pledge, at the cost of five marks: he had hoped to have borrowed of Townsend, but Townsend is ill. If he has not ten pounds, he can do little good, and wots not how to come home. 'This gear hath troubled me so that it hath made me more than half-sick, as God help me.' Poor solitary Sir John, within a fortnight, is dead in London, and buried in the White Friars.

Old Agnes, the grandmother, dies about the same time. John, the second brother, is now Lord of Caister; and he seems to have prospered better than his brother or his father; for he is high-sheriff of Norfolk, and a knight-banneret before he is gathered to his ancestors in 1503. He and his Margery dwell in Caister. On the 24th of December, 1484, the loving and careful wife writes, 'Right worshipful husband, I recommend me unto you: please it you to weet that I send your eldest son to my Lady Morley, to have knowledge what sports were used in her house in Christmas next following after the decease of my lord her husband; and she said that there were none disguisings, nor harping, nor luting, nor singing, nor none loud disports; but playing at the tables, and chess, and cards; such disports she gave her folks leave to play, and none other.'

Who is sorrowed for, so that the harp and the lute and the voice of song are hushed this Christmas at Caister? Margaret Paston, who wore her 'bright sanguine' wedding-gown in 1440, is gone to sleep beside her husband in Broomholm Priory.

These Paston Letters were written in the days before the Post. Carriers there were, and pack-horses, and traders who went from Norwich to London at Bartholomew Fair, and these might convey a letter safely. The great people could afford to send a letter by a special messenger, with 'Ride, ride, ride for your life.' But the Pastons availed themselves of less costly modes of communication.

The Paston Letters were written in the days before Newspapers. They tell of public events as fully as of private. Their news is a little old in its date—but what matters that? The light of a star may be centuries coming to us, as the astronomers hold; but it is not less a light when it has come. Sir John Paston writes, in a letter to his mother in the spring of 1475, to tell the news of the battle of Morat, which was fought in the autumn of 1474. 'Our own Correspondent' would have despatched the

tidings somewhat more quickly ; but perhaps not quite so compendiously : ‘ After this conquest of Lorraine, the Duke of Burgundy took great courage to go upon the land of the Swiss to conquer them ; but they bearded him at an unset place, and hath distressed him, and hath slain the most part of his vanward, and won all his ordnance and artillery, and moreover all stuff that he had in his host, except men and horse that fled not ; but they rode that night twenty miles ; and so the rich salets, helmets, garters, nowches, gelt, and all is gone, with tents, pavilions and all, and so men deem his pride is abated.’ Look at Comines, and you will find that Sir John had got to the root of the matter.

The Paston Letters were written in the days before Banks. This distressed family seem luckily to have kept out of the hands of the Jews ; but if it had been thought honest in those days to take interest, the perpetual labour and humiliation to scrape together a few pounds might have been avoided. But what could bankers have done for them in anticipation of rents, when there was little exchange of commodities, in a country where producers and consumers were widely separated ?

The Paston Letters were written in the days before Power-looms ; so that a new coat and a new gown were matters to be very earnest about, even with a knight-banneret and a lady of the manor.

The Paston Letters were written in the days before the Printing-Press ; and so, some may marvel that they are so clearly expressed, and have so many just thoughts, and are for the most part earnest and to the purpose. The very absence of any character derived from a current literature is, rightly considered, a charm of this correspondence. Romances, indeed, the ladies had to read, of Arthur, and Guy, and Richard Cœur de Lion : and they had many an old ballad, now preserved or lost ; and they had legends of the Saints. Sir John Paston had a library of which an inventory is left, consisting altogether of thirty-four volumes. Of these one was ‘ in print.’ Anne Paston (of whom we

hear little) had a book, 'The Siege of Thebes.' But neither gentleman nor lady had much opportunity for literature, even though one of the greatest of poets had long before opened his 'well of English undefiled.' There is not one allusion to Chaucer in all this correspondence of fifty years.

The Paston Letters were written in the days before the Reformation, although the morning sky showed streaks of that day-spring; and so we have glimpses of friars and pilgrims; and Sir John Paston tells a tale of 'a vision seen about the walls of Boulogne, as it had been a woman with a marvellous light; men deeming that Our Lady there will show herself a lover of that town.' Let us not laugh at the undoubting mind of Sir John Paston. With touches of what we call superstition, there was, amongst these people, a deep abiding sense of God over all—a part of the reverence that was a great characteristic of our nation—of children for parents, of servants for masters, of wives for husbands—of the laity for the church—ONCE UPON A TIME.



Framlingham Castle.

THE DISCOVERER OF MADEIRA.

It is the beginning of June: the year 1419. Two small vessels are leaving the port of Lisbon. The Infant Dom Henry waves his hand from the quay, as the commander of the little expedition bows profoundly from the deck of the leading ship. That commander is Gonzalves Zarco.

Where is Gonzalves sailing when he trusts his ships to the broad bosom of the Atlantic? Where, without the guides of modern navigation? Charts he has none. He has heard that Marco Polo brought from China to Europe the knowledge of an instrument that invariably pointed to the North—but he doubts. He will hug the land as long as he can. The meridian sun and the Polar star must direct him in his need. His business is to find the Isles of the West, of which ancient tradition imperfectly whispers. In 1418, Gonzalves was engaged in exploring the coasts of Africa. He was shipwrecked on a little island, which he will now endeavour again to reach.

The seas are calm; the days are bright and long. If the nights are dark, Gonzalves anchors. He is pretty certain of the course. In due time he reaches the small island of Porto Santo, in which, last year, he left two or three of his crew.

What is this strange relation which soon meets the ear of Gonzalves—a relation which is to give new ardour to his sagacious courage, but which has terrors for his superstitious seamen? On the north-east of the isle there appears, at a long distance, a thick darkness—a motionless cloud—which hangs over the sea, and reaches to the sky. That region of darkness—is it not the abyss? There, is the boundary of this earth; and beyond, is the entrance to the Shades. Sometimes a distant murmur, as of troubled waters, comes

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across the sea. It is the rush of the mournful river of Acheron. Some say, that when the Christians fled from the oppression of the Moors and Saracens, they found an island of refuge in this ocean; and that from that time a mysterious cloud covered that island, so that no enemy could come near to harm them. Who shall dare to pierce that cloud, and solve these mysteries?

Gonzalves sits on the beach of Porto Santo, and looks again and again in the direction of that cloud. When the morning sun shines bright in the east, the cloud is there. When the moon climbs the sky, the cloudy distance is still visible. It never changes its place; its form is always the same. Gonzalves will take counsel of Juan de Morales, his pilot.

Juan is many years younger than Gonzalves; yet his forehead is wrinkled with cares that scarcely belong to the young. He has passed his boyhood in captivity in Morocco. He has done servile offices up to the period of manhood. He has been chained to the oar, and rowed his taskmasters through many a perilous surf. There is something strange and mysterious about him. His messmates shun him, for they say he is a Castilian, and an enemy to Portugal. He has the Castilian steadiness, with more than Castilian reserve. Misfortune has not abased him: he carries himself as loftily as the proudest of his countrymen; and yet he is of a fairer complexion than those countrymen, and he speaks their language with a singular mixture of other dialects, and even of other tongues. But that may come of his long captivity amongst Christian slaves of all lands. Juan is not popular: but Gonzalves has unbounded confidence in his pilot.

‘Juan,’ says Gonzalves, ‘we will wait no longer. Hold you still your opinion?’

‘My belief is ever the same. That dark mass, so defined and unchanging, is a mountainous land, seen through a constant mist.’

‘You have the confidence of knowledge, rather than of conjecture. Did you ever hear speak of such a mountainous

land? In that quarter, leagues off, must lie the African deserts.'

'I have no knowledge—except my dreams be knowledge. I dream of mountains, rising from the sea, covered with trees to the very summits; of ravines, where rivers come dashing down out of the mountain mists, and rush brightly to the ocean; of a narrow beach under the mountains, where the waves break wildly, and yet how beautifully!'

'Juan! you must have seen such a land!'

'Oh no! it is a dream—a dream of the poor ship-boy's loneliness.'

'We will sail to-morrow, Juan.'

'Good.' •

'Say nothing; but steer us right to the cloud.'

The anchors are weighed in the dawn of a summer morning. A brisk breeze soon carries them away from Porto Santo. There is 'a man of importance on board, Francis Alcaforado, a squire of Dom Henry's chamber. He is keeping a diary of that voyage—a busy inquisitive man.

'Captain, where are you steering?'

'To look for the Isles of the West.'

'But you are sailing towards the darkness!'

'I think they lie beyond the darkness.'

'You are tempting Heaven. See, we are in the bosom of a mist. There is no sun in the sky. Change your course, Gonzalves.'

'Sir, I must obey my commission.'

'Look! there is something darker still in the distance.'

'I have seen it before—it is land.'

Juan is at the helm. He steers boldly through the mist. It is land. The sun is behind that mass of mountains. Juan must be cautious; there are rocks in that sea. Gonzalves orders out the boats. There is a loud murmuring of surf upon a shore not very distant. The sun is mounting out of the exhalation. The mist is rolling off. There are trees on the hills. The boats may near the shore. Glory to Saint Lawrence! That eastern cape first seen, and now doubled, shall be the Cape San Lourenço! All

are joyful but Juan de Morals. It is not the land of his dreams. The crew gather round the pilot—and greet him well. But he is silent.

There is a streamlet gushing down to the sea. Gonzalves commands the crew to disembark. A priest goes with them. The water is blessed. The shore is blessed. The commander of the expedition proclaims that the mysterious cloud-land is a veritable possession of the King of Portugal.

And now they coast carefully along in their boats. They peer into the dark ravines, covered with everlasting forests. Again and again they land. Are there any inhabitants? Not a trace of human dwelling, not a footprint, not a token that man has ever abided here. Birds of bright plumage fly fearlessly about them. They come to a point where four rivers join in their course to the sea. They fill their flasks to carry that sparkling water to the banks of the yellow Tagus. They bring provisions on shore, and sit down in a green valley where gentle waterfalls are sparkling around. They penetrate a wood; the rough gales have torn up some trees. They elevate one tree, and form a cross; they kneel, and the priest gives his benediction. This point is Santa Cruz. They coast on; a tongue of land stretches far out—a shady covert. Suddenly a flight of jays darkens the air. This shall be Punta dos Gralhos, the point of jays. Further on, another tongue of land is covered with cedars, and this, with the Punta dos Gralhos, forms a wooded bay. It shall be the bay of cedars. Another valley is reached, and here Gonzalves makes an attempt to ascend the high ground: he sees enough to satisfy him that what he has discovered is an island. Again Gonzalves leads the way in his boat, and reaches an open space, where the land is not encumbered with the dense growth of timber that has everywhere else met their view. The sea-beach to the foot of the mountains is covered with fennel, the *funcho* of the Portuguese. This beach shall be called *Funchal*.

What has happened to Juan de Morals? He stirs not—he speaks not. He looks upon the sea—he looks up the

ravine. Then he rushes to gaze upon the islets which the rivers of that valley have formed in their perennial courses: he smiles, he weeps; he sees something very like the land of his dreams.

The ships have followed the course of the boats; but at a wide berth from the land. They now come into the bay of Funchal, and anchor in the river: here will the crew next day take in wood and water. They cannot have a pleasanter harbour. They will sleep in security. The sea is smooth; the air is balmy. The watch is set; and Juan, though his duty is ended, is amongst the watchers. The ripple of the river seems a familiar sound. He listens, as if he expected some human voice to mingle with that murmur of waters. The moon rises. The wooded ravine lies before him in deep shadow; but here and there is a breadth of silvery light. Is that the figure of a man moving on the bright greensward? The sea-breeze stirs the topmost branches of the cedars, and their shadows, Juan, make up the semblance of humanity.

On the morrow the island is again explored. No sign of cultivation—no trace of man. In the heart of the mountains there are mighty chasms, into which the torrents rush, and form gentle rivers. Cedars and chestnut-trees rise into the foggy summits of the highest peaks. Myrtles clothe the precipitous declivities. Deep caverns have been dug into the sides of the rocks by the untiring sea. Hush! there is a noise as of the tread of men. A multitude of seals rush out from that hollow, with a sudden cry, and plunge into the waves. That point shall be Camara dos Lobos, the cave of seals. The navigation becomes more difficult. The surf is more dangerous on that rocky coast. Gonzalves will return to his ships in the bay of Funchal. He is eager to be once more in the Tagus: he has brave tidings for Dom Henry. One such discovery is enough for a summer. But what shall he call this noble island? He takes counsel of the squire Alcaforado, who has been busy with his tablets incessantly. He will write a narrative of this prosperous voyage, which shall be deposited in the archives

of Portugal.* The island shall be called Madeiro—the island of Wood.

It is the summer of 1421, and Gonzalves Zarco is again embarking in the port of Lisbon.

The preparations for this voyage are very different from those of the expedition of 1419. One ship, of considerable tonnage, is now employed. Large stores of provisions are taken into the hold—raisins and olives, and casks of wine from Xeres and Oporto. There are live animals too in considerable numbers—sheep and goats, and a few mules. Cuttings of the choicest vines, and small plants from the orange groves, are carefully stowed and duly watered. There are implements of husbandry, and artificers' tools—spades and axes, anvils and hammers. Tents are there for shelter; spears and bows for defence. There are the nets of the fisherman and of the fowler. But, in greater abundance than all, packages of clothing. A colony is to be founded.

Gonzalves comes on board with his two sons. They carefully inspect a little cabin, that is fitted up with unusual luxury. They are satisfied—they go on shore. Presently a litter appears, borne by four of the crew, who tread briskly under their load. Gonzalves walks before them. The litter is set down on the deck, and a delicate girl is lifted out by the sons of Gonzalves, and carried to the decorated cabin. She scarcely speaks—she is ill and exhausted. The ship is under weigh. Juan de Morales is again at the helm.

The heat of the day is over. The ship has dropped down the Tagus, and passed the bar. The distant vesper-bell is sounding into the quiet evening. Anna Zarco is refreshed, and begs to be brought upon deck. A couch is made up at

* In 1672, was published, at Paris, '*Relation Historique de la Découverte de l'Isle de Madère*,' which professes to be a translation from a Portuguese book, of which the manuscript then existed. An abstract of this French work, which is the narrative of Francis Alcaforado, has been given in a new '*Biographie Universelle*,' 1852. The French work is stated to be a book of the most extreme rarity, and no copy, it appears, is known to exist of the Portuguese original.

the stern. The sick girl speaks cheerfully to her father, as she watches the stars coming softly out of the blue sky. There is a light in the fort of St. Julian, which grows fainter and fainter as they sail on. Anna has fixed her lustrous eyes on that light. It is the last object that marks her native land. It is gone. It mingles with the stars. She looks in her father's face. A thought comes across him which forces a tear or two. Will Anna ever again see her birth-place? Will she reach her new home?

The ship's course is now direct to Madeiro. Every evening the feeble girl is brought upon the deck, and lies peacefully there, with her thin hand resting in the large rough palm of her father's. She listens with interest as the commander talks to his pilot. They talk of the beautiful island to which they are sailing, of its pleasant climate, its green woods, its sparkling streams. They will land at Funchal. They will run up their houses on that sheltered beach; their sheep and goats shall pasture in the green valley between the mountains. They will find clear sunny spots on the hill-sides to plant their vines; they will have an orange-grove sheltered from the north, and will water their plants by channels from the river, whose streams will never fail. 'Quintas' of olive and maize shall flourish in that genial soil. They will have everything for comfort soon around them. Gonzalves has the command of the island—he will be a kind viceroy over few but happy subjects.

We see the shadow of Gonzalves, after he has landed, without storm or pirate to harm him during his passage. He has dwelt with his sons and his daughter for a short while in tents; but a house strong enough to stand against the Atlantic gales is soon built; it has abundance of conveniences; other houses are growing up around them. Friends have come with Gonzalves to settle with him. An ecclesiastic is here to teach and to console. Before the equinox, the good ship is to return to Lisbon with a diminished crew,—and a freight of native curiosities for Dom Henry, their patron.

Let us look at the shadow of Juan de Morales in this interval of his sea-life. He comes on shore daily to assist his captain; he works at the buildings; he cuts timber; he dries the reeds and rushes of the watercourses for a ready thatch. Juan is handy, and seems to have an almost instinctive knowledge of the sweetest pastures for the sheep and the best soil for the corn and olives. But Juan has a gentler task to perform. Anna Zarco is growing strong enough to take exercise. Juan daily leads her mule up into the shady hills, or along the margin of the sea. Sometimes, when there is not a cloud in the sky, and there is a gentle ripple in the bay, Juan strews sweet rushes in his boat, on which Anna placidly lies, breathing the soft air with a sense of delight that is the herald of renovated health. Juan, then, tells her the seamen's stories of storm and wreck; of pirates who lie in wait for the defenceless merchant-ship—the enemies of all nations; of Moors, who, in their hatred of Christian people, fiercely attack every vessel that comes near their inhospitable coasts, and carry their crews to a life-long slavery. Juan tells her, too, of distant lands, for in his own captivity he has gathered much knowledge from other captives—of England, especially, and its great King Edward, and his wars in France. Of England, Juan delights to talk; and when Anna asks him of his own life, before he was in slavery at Fez, he has a confused story, with something English in his recollections, which makes her think he is not a Castilian, as the sailors say he is. Gonzalves is happy that his daughter is gaining such health in this daily life, and willingly does he spare his pilot to be her guide and companion; for in a few weeks Juan will return to Lisbon, and then, when the house is finished, and the quinta planted, he will lead her mule himself, and himself will row her, in bright autumn days, under the shade of the mountains. There is a place about three miles off, where Anna's mule is often led by the pilot. He conducts her through a narrow defile, when suddenly they are in a valley—a mere chasm between the loftiest mountains—a solemn place, but one also of rare loveliness—for the

basaltic rocks are clothed with evergreens, and the narrow, level plain has a smiling river running through its entire length. Juan delights to bring his tender charge to this secluded spot; but here he is ever more than usually silent.

One day, Anna looks in Juan's face, and sees that he has been weeping. There is one spot in that valley which he often stops at—a spot marked by a pile of stones. On this day, Juan suddenly falls on his knees at this spot, and prays for a minute. Anna is scarcely surprised, for Juan is a mysterious man—quite unlike other seamen. She questions him.

‘Juan, my kind nurse, for you have been as a nurse to me in my feebleness, why did you kneel, and why have you been weeping?’

‘Señora! forgive me. I must not tell you. The knowledge that makes me weep is now little more than a vain memory. It has nothing in common with my present fortune. I shall sail again to Lisbon—perhaps never to come back. Do not ask me.’

‘But, Juan, I look on you as a brother. I am getting well under your care. Will you not confide in your sister?’

‘Nay, lady! Yet I must speak. You will keep my secret. I believe that I knelt at my mother's grave!’

‘Your mother's grave? How, Juan, could your mother ever come to this island, where never ships touched before my father's ship?’

‘It is a wild story, an almost improbable story. But you shall hear it. My earliest memories, I once thought, were of my task-masters in Morocco, of whom I have before told you. I became a slave when I was four or five years old, as near as I may guess. There was a companion in my fate, who was kind to me—an English sailor. He taught me his language: he said he would one day tell me my own history. All that I knew was, that the ship in which he and I were sailing was captured by a corsair, and carried into Fez. I was in captivity twelve years; but I then escaped, and got to Spain. The infidels had made me a

skilful seaman, and I had good knowledge of their coasts. After some time I went to Lisbon. I became your father's pilot. The Englishman and I had been soon separated; but he had told me something about an island in the west; and I gladly went with your father in quest of those western islands. When we came here two years ago, it seemed to me as if everything were familiar; but yet confused. I was in a dream. In the spring of this year an English vessel came into the Tagus. I talked with some of the crew. I spoke of our discovery of Madeiro, and of the prize it might be to the Crown of Portugal. An old sailor said, that the Portuguese were not the first discoverers. I grew angry; but the Englishman was confident. I will repeat what he said:—

“The discoverer of that island was Robert Machin, my countryman. Robert Machin, a bold adventurer, won the love of Anne Arfet, the daughter of a Bristol merchant. His suit was rejected by the father; but Robert married her, and carried her off in his ship. They were bound for the Mediterranean, but missed their course. Their vessel foundered in the Atlantic; Machin and his wife were saved. They reached the wooded island, which you Portuguese have named Madeiro. They abode there three or four years; in utter solitude, but contented and happy. The wife then sickened and died. They had a little boy; but Robert could not endure that loneliness, and he dreaded now that he might die, and that the boy should perish. He resolved to leave the island as he had come to it. He stowed his boat with chestnuts, and with fish dried in the sun—the food on which he and his wife had always subsisted. It was a calm season, and he made good way. Off the coast of Morocco an English ship picked him up. I was the mate of that ship. Poor fellow! his toil and his grief had been too much for him. He died in a few weeks—his boy was my charge. I was little use to him, for we were soon taken by a rover, and carried into Fez. I wish I could meet with that orphan boy. But that will never be!”

Anna Zarco blushes and trembles:—‘I know the rest. You were that little boy; and this island is your inheritance, and not my father’s discovery.’

‘Keep my secret, Anna. I love your father, and would not rob him of an atom of his honour.’

Anna Zarco does not keep the secret from her father, who is a just man, and not unmindful of his daughter’s happiness.

Juan de Morale’s does not return to Lisbon.

In a few years there is a pretty cottage, and a vineyard in the ‘corral,’ where, not far from the tomb of stones, dwell other Machins, John and Anne, whose shadows are pleasant to look on.

THE SILENT HIGHWAY.

ONE of the most remarkable pictures of ancient manners which has been transmitted to us is that in which the poet Gower describes the circumstances under which he was commanded by King Richard II.

‘To make a book after his hest.’

The good old rhymer,—‘The moral Gower,’ as Chaucer calls him,—who probably resided in Southwark, where his monument may yet be seen in the church of St. Mary Overies, had taken boat; and upon the broad river he met the king in his stately barge. It was an accidental meeting, he tells us. The monarch, who had come most probably from his palace of Westminster, where thousands ministered, it is said, to his luxurious tastes, espied the familiar face of the minstrel, and stopped him upon that great highway of London, which was an open road for the meanest as for the highest. He called him on board his own vessel, and desired him to book ‘some new thing.’ This was the origin of the ‘*Confessio Amantis*.’ But the poet shall record the story in his own simple words:—

‘As it befel upon a tide,
As thing which should then betide,
Under the towné of New Troy,
Which took of Brute his firsté joy;
In Thames, when it was flowing,
As I by boate came rowing,
So as fortune her time set,
My liege lord perchance I met,
And so befel, as I came nigh,
Out of my boat, when he me sygh (*saw*)
He bade me come into his barge:
And when I was with him at large,

Among other thinges said
He hath this charge upon me laid,
And bade me do my business,
That to his high worthiness
Some new thinge I should look,
That he himself it might look,
After the form of my writing.
And thus upon his commanding,
Mine hearte is well the more glad
To write so as he me bade.'

Nothing can be more picturesque than this description, and nothing can more forcibly carry us into the very heart of the past. With the exception of some of the oldest portions of the Tower of London, there is scarcely a brick or a stone left standing that may present to us a memorial of 'the king's chamber'* of four hundred and fifty years ago. There, indeed, is the river still flowing and still ebbing,—the most ancient thing we can look upon,—which made London what it was and what it is. Nearly all that then adorned its banks has perished; and many of the stirring histories of the busy life that moved upon its waters have become to us as obscure as the legend of 'New Troy.'

The 'Prologue' of Gower, in the true spirit of the romantic times, tells us of the town which was founded by the Trojan Brute. Here was the fable which the middle-age minstrels rejoiced in, and which History has borrowed from Poetry without any compromise of her propriety. The origin of nations must be fabulous; and if we would penetrate into the dark past, we must be satisfied with the torch-light which fable presents to us. We commend, therefore, the belief of the good citizens of London, who, in the time of Henry VI., sent the king a copy of an ancient tract, which says of London, 'According to the credit of chronicles it is considerably older than Rome; and that it was by the same Trojan author, built by Brute, after the likeness of great Troy, before that built by Romulus and Remus. Whence to this day it useth and enjoyeth the

* *Camera Regia*; which title, immediately after the Norman Conquest, London began to have.—CAMDEN.

ancient city Troy's liberties, rights, and customs.* This is dealing with a legend in a business-like manner, worthy of grave aldermen and sheriffs. Between Brute and Richard II. there is a long interval; and the chroniclers have filled it up with many pleasant stories, and the antiquarians have embellished it with many ingenious theories. We must leap over all these. One ancient writer, however, who speaks from his own knowledge,—William Fitz-Stephen, who died in 1191,—has left us a record in his 'Description of London,' which will take us back a few hundred years further. The original is in Latin. 'The wall of the city is high and great, continued with seven gates, which are made double, and on the north distinguished with turrets by spaces: likewise on the south, London hath been enclosed with walls and towers, but the large river of Thames, well stored with fish, and in which the tide ebbs and flows, by continuance of time hath washed, worn away, and cast down those walls.' Here, then, six hundred and fifty years ago, we find the river-bank of London in the same state as described by Sir Thomas More in his imaginary capital of Amaurote:—'The city is compassed about with a high and thick stone wall, full of turrets and bulwarks. A dry ditch, but deep and broad, and overgrown with bushes, briars, and thorns, goeth about three sides or quarters of the city. To the fourth side, the river itself serveth as a ditch.'† The Saxon Chronicle tells us that in the year 1052, Earl Godwin, with his navy, passed along the southern side of the river, and so assailed the walls. A hundred and fifty years after, in the time of Fitz-Stephen, the walls were gone. About the same period arose the stone bridge of London; but that has perished before the eyes of our own generation.

There is another passage in Fitz-Stephen which takes us, as do most of his descriptions, into the every-day life of the ancient Londoners—their schools, their feasting, and their sports:—

'In Easter holydays they fight battles on the water.

* Stow, book i.

† Utopia, b. ii. c. ii.

A shield is hanged on a pole, fixed in the midst of the stream; a boat is prepared without oars, to be carried by violence of the water, and in the fore-part thereof standeth a young man, ready to give charge upon the shield with his lance. If so be he break his lance against the shield and doth not fall, he is thought to have performed a worthy deed. If so be, without breaking his lance, he runneth



Water Quintain, of a later time.

strongly against the shield, down he falleth into the water, for the boat is violently forced with the tide; but on each side of the shield ride two boats, furnished with two young men, which recover him that falleth as soon as they may. Upon the bridge, wharfs, and houses by the riverside, stand great numbers to see and laugh thereat.' Four centuries afterwards, Stow saw a somewhat similar game:—'I have seen also in the summer season, upon the river of Thames,

some rowed in wherries, with staves in their hands, flat at the fore-end, running one against another, and, for the most part, one or both of them were overthrown and well ducked.' Howell says, 'There was in former times a sport used upon the Thames, which is *now discontinued*: it was for two wherries to row, and run one against the other, with staves in their hands, flat at the fore-end; which kind of recreation is much practised among the gondolas of Venice.*'

From the time of Fitz-Stephen to that of Gower, we may readily conceive that the water-communication between one part of London and another, and between London and Westminster, was constantly increasing. A portion of London Bridge was moveable, which enabled vessels of burden to pass up the river to unload at Queenhithe and other wharfs. Stairs (called bridges) and Water-gates studded the shores of both cities. Palaces arose, such as the Savoy, where the powerful nobles kept almost regal state. The Courts of Law were fixed at Westminster; and thither the citizens and strangers from the country daily resorted, preferring the easy highway of the Thames to the almost impassable road that led from Westminster to the village of Charing, and onward to London. John Lydgate, who wrote in the time of Henry V., has left us a very curious poem, entitled 'London Lyckpeny.' He gives us a picture of his coming to London to obtain legal redress of some grievance, but without money to pursue his suit. Upon quitting Westminster Hall, he says,

'Then to Westminster Gate I presently went.'

This is undoubtedly the Water-gate; and, without describing anything beyond the cooks, whom he found busy with their bread and beef at the gate, 'when the sun was at high prime,' he adds,

'Then unto London I did me hie.'

By water he no doubt went, for through Charing he would have made a day's journey. Wanting money, he has no

* Londinopolis: 1657.

choice but to return to the country; and having to go 'into Kent,' he applies to the watermen at Billingsgate:—

'Then hied I me to Billingsgate,
And one cried *hoo*—go we hence:
I pray'd a bargeman, for God's sake,
That he would spare me my expense.
Thou scap'st not here, quoth he, under two pence.'

We have a corroboration of the accuracy of this picture in Lambarde's 'Perambulation of Kent.' The old topographer informs us that in the time of Richard II. the inhabitants of Milton and Gravesend agreed to carry in their boats, from London to Gravesend, a passenger, with his truss or farthell, for twopence.

The poor Kentish suitor, without twopence in his pocket to pay the Gravesend bargeman, takes his solitary way on foot homeward. The *gate* where he was welcomed with the cry of *hoo*—ho, ahoy—was the great landing-place of the coasting-vessels; and the king here anciently took his toll upon imports and exports. The Kentishman comes to Billingsgate from Cornhill; but it was not an uncommon thing for boats, even in those times, to accomplish the feat of passing through the fall occasioned by the narrowness of the arches of London Bridge; and the loss of life in these adventures was not an unfrequent occurrence. Gifford, in a note upon a passage in Ben Jonson's 'Staple of News,' says somewhat pettishly of the old bridge, 'Had an alderman or a turtle been lost there, the nuisance would have been long since removed.' A greater man than an alderman—John Mowbray, the second Duke of Norfolk—nearly perished there in 1428. But there were landing-places in abundance between Westminster and London Bridge, so that a danger such as this was not necessary to be incurred. When the unfortunate Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester, was condemned to do penance in London in three open places, on three several days, she was brought by water from Westminster; and on the 13th November, 1440, was put on shore at the Temple bridge; on the 15th, at the Old Swan; and, on the 17th, at Queenhithe. Here,

exactly four centuries ago, we have the same stairs described by the same names as we find at the present day. The Old Swan (close to London Bridge) was the *Old Swan* in the time of Henry VI., as it continued to be in the time of Elizabeth. If we turn to the earliest maps of London we find, in the same way, Broken Wharf, and Paul's Wharf, and Essex Stairs, the Whitehall Stairs. The abiding-places of the watermen appear to have been as unchanging as their thoroughfare—the same river ever gliding, and the same inlets from that broad and cheerful highway to the narrow and gloomy streets.

The watermen of London, like every other class of the people, were once musical; and their 'oars kept time' to many a harmony, which, if not so poetical as the song of the gondoliers, was full of the heart of merry England. The old city chronicler, Fabyan, tells us that John Norman, Mayor of London (he held this dignity in 1454), was 'the first of all mayors who brake that ancient and old-continued custom of *riding* to Westminster upon the morrow of Simon and Jude's day. John Norman *'was rowed thither by water,* for the which the waterman made of him a roundel, or song, to his great praise, the which began—

"Row the boat, Norman, row to thy leman."

The watermen's ancient chorus, as we collect from old ballads, was

'Heave and how, rumbelow;'

and their burden was still the same in the time of Henry VIII., not forgetting, 'Row the boat, Norman.* Well might the first mayor who carried the pomp of the city to the great Thames, and made

'The barge *he* sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn on the water,'

deserve the praises of watermen in all time! We could willingly spare many more intrinsically valuable things than the city water-pageant; for it takes us even now into

* Skelton.

the old forms of life; and if it shows us more than all other pageants something of the perishableness of power and dignity, it has a fine antique grandeur about it, and tells us that London, and what belongs to London, are not of yesterday.

We every now and then turn up in the old Chronicles, and Memoirs, and Letters that have been rescued from mice and mildew, some graphic description of the use of the river as the common highway of London. These old writers were noble hands at scene-painting. What a picture Hall gives us of the populousness of the Thames!—the perfect contrast to Wordsworth's

‘The river glideth at his own sweet will’—

in the story which he tells us of the Archbishop of York, after leaving the widow of Edward IV. in the sanctuary of Westminster, sitting ‘alone below on the rushes, all desolate and dismayed,’ returning home to York Place in the dawning of the day; ‘and when he opened his windows and looked on the Thames, he might see the river full of boats of the Duke of Gloucester his servants, watching that no person should go to sanctuary, nor none should pass unsearched.’ Cavendish, in his ‘Life of Wolsey,’ furnishes as graphic a description of the great Cardinal hurrying to and fro on the highway of the Thames, between his imperious master and the injured Katharine, when Henry had become impatient of the tedious conferences of the Court at Blackfriars sitting on the question of his divorce, and desired to throw down with the strong hand the barriers that kept him from the Lady Anne:—‘Thus this court passed from session to session, and day to day, in so much that a certain day the king sent for my lord at the breaking up one day of the court to come to him into Bridewell. And to accomplish his commandment he went unto him, and being there with him in communication in his grace’s privy chamber from eleven until twelve of the clock and past at noon, my lord came out and departed from the king, and took his barge at the Black Friars, and

so went to his house at Westminster. The Bishop of Carlisle, being with him in his barge, said unto him (wiping the sweat from his face), "Sir," quoth he, "it is a very hot day." "Yea," quoth my Lord Cardinal, "if ye had been as well chafed as I have been within this hour, ye would say it were very hot." Between Westminster and the Tower, and the Tower and Greenwich, the Thames was especially the royal road. When Henry VII. willed the coronation of his Queen Elizabeth, she came from Greenwich attended by 'barges freshly furnished with banners and streamers of silk.' When Henry VIII. avowed his marriage with Anne Boleyn, she was brought by 'all the crafts of London' from Greenwich to the Tower, 'trumpets, shawms, and other divers instruments, all the way playing and making great melody.' The river was not only the festival highway, but the more convenient one, for kings as well as subjects. Hall tells us, 'This year (1536), in December, was the Thames of London all frozen over, *wherefore* the king's majesty, with his beautiful spouse Queen Jane, rode throughout the city of London to Greenwich.' The interesting volume of the 'Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII.' contains item upon item of sums paid to watermen for waiting with barge and boat. The barge was evidently always in attendance upon the king; and the great boat was ever busy, moving household stuff and servants from Westminster to Greenwich or to Richmond. In 1531 we have a curious evidence of the king being deep in his polemical studies, in a record of payment 'to John, the king's bargeman, for coming twice from Greenwich to York Place with a great boat with books for the king.' We see the 'great Eliza' on the Thames, in all her pomp, as Raleigh saw her out of his prison-window in the Tower, in 1592, as described in a letter from Arthur Gorges to Cecil:—'Upon a report of her majesty's being at Sir George Carew's, Sir W. Raleigh having gazed and sighed a long time at his study-window, from whence he might discern the barges and boats about the Blackfriars stairs, suddenly he brake out into a great distemper, and

swore that his enemies had on purpose brought her majesty thither to break his gall in sunder with Tantalus' torment, that when she went away he might see death before his eyes; with many such-like conceits. And, as a man transported with passion, he swore to Sir George Carew that he would disguise himself, and get into a pair of oars to ease his mind with but a sight of the queen.' In the time of Elizabeth and the first James, and onward to very recent days, the north bank of the Thames was studded with the palaces of the nobles; and each palace had its landing-place and its private retinue of barges and wherries; and many a freight of the brave and beautiful has been borne, amidst song and merriment, from house to house, to join the masque and the dance; and many a wily statesman, muffled in his cloak, has glided along unseen in his boat to some dark conference with his ambitious neighbour. Nothing could then have been more picturesque than the Strand, with its broad gardens, and lofty trees, and embattled turrets and pinnacles. Upon the river itself, busy as it was, fleets of swans were ever sailing; and they ventured unmolested into that channel which is now narrowed by vessels from every region. Paulus Jovius, who died in 1552, describing the Thames, says, 'This river abounds in swans, swimming in flocks; the sight of whom and their noise are vastly agreeable to the fleets that meet them in their course.' Shakspeare must have seen this sight, when he made York compare the struggle of his followers at the battle of Wakefield to a swan encountering a tidal stream:—

' As I have seen a swan,
With bootless labour swim against the tide,
And spend her strength with over-matching waves.' *

But there were those, during three centuries, to whom the beauties of the silent highway could have offered no pleasure. The Thames was the road by which the victim of despotism came from the Tower to Westminster Hall, in most cases to return to his barge with the edge of the axe

* Henry VI., part III.

towards his face. One example is enough to suggest many painful recollections. When the Duke of Buckingham was conducted from his trial to the barge, 'Sir Thomas Lovel desired him to sit on the cushions and carpet ordained for him. He said, 'Nay; for when I went to Westminster I was Duke of Buckingham; now I am but Edward Bohun, the most caitiff of the world.'* But these exhibitions, frequent as they were, occupied little of the thoughts of those who were moving upon the Thames, in hundreds of boats, intent upon business or amusement. In the beginning of the seventeenth century the river was at the height of its glory as the great thoroughfare of London. Howell maintains that the river of Thames hath not her fellow, 'if regard be had to those forests of masts which are perpetually upon her; the variety of smaller wooden bottoms playing up and down; the stately palaces that are built upon both sides of her banks so thick; which made divers foreign ambassadors affirm that the most glorious sight in the world, take water and land together, was to come upon a high tide from Gravesend, and shoot the bridge to Westminster.'† Of the 'smaller wooden bottoms,' Stow computes that there were in his time as many as two thousand; and he makes the very extraordinary statement, that there were forty thousand watermen upon the rolls of the company, and that they could furnish twenty thousand men for the fleet. The private watermen of the court and of the nobility were doubtless included in this large number. It is evident, from the representations of a royal procession in the early times of James I., that, even on common occasions, the sovereign moved upon the Thames with regal pomp, surrounded with many boats of guards and musicians.

The Inns of Court, too, filled as they were not only with the great practitioners of the law, but with thousands of wealthy students, gave ample employment to the watermen. Upon the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the

* Hall.

† Londinopolis, p. 403.

Palatine, in 1613, the gentlemen of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn presented a sumptuous masque at court. 'These maskers, with their whole train in all triumphant manner and good order, took barge at Winchester Stairs, about seven of the clock that night, and rowed to Whitehall against the tide: the chief maskers went in the king's barge, royally adorned, and plenteously furnished with a great number of great wax lights, that they alone made a glorious show: other gentlemen went in the prince's barge, and certain other went in other fair barges, and were led by two admirals: besides all these, they had four lusty warlike galleys to convoy and attend them; each barge and galley, being replenished with store of torch-lights, made so rare and brave a show upon the water, as the like was never seen upon the Thames.'* When Charles was created Prince of Wales, in 1616, he came from Barn Elms to Whitehall in great aquatic state. In 1625, when Henrietta Maria arrived in London (June 16), 'the king and queen in the royal barge, with many other barges of honour and thousands of boats, passed through London Bridge to Whitehall; infinite numbers, besides these, in wherries, standing in houses, ships, lighters, western barges, and on each side of the shore.'† What a contrast does this splendour and rejoicing present to the scene which a few years disclosed!—'The barge-windows,' (says Mr. Mead, the writer of the letter,) 'notwithstanding the vehement shower, were open: and all the people shouting amain. She put out her hand, and shook it unto them.' The Whitehall, to which the daughter of Henri Quatre was thus conveyed, had another tale to tell in some twenty-three years; and the long tragedy of the fated race of the Stuarts almost reaches its catastrophe, when, in a cold winter night of 1688 the wife of James II. takes a common boat at Whitehall to fly with her child to some place of safety; and when in a few weeks later the fated king steps into a barge, surrounded by Dutch guards, amidst the

* Howes' Continuation of Stow's Annals, p. 1007.

† Ellis's Letters, vol. iii. p. 196.

triumph of his enemies, and the pity even of those good men who blamed his obstinacy and rashness: 'I saw him take barge,' says Evelyn,—'a sad sight.' But let us turn from political changes to those more enduring revolutions which changes of manners produce.

We have before us a goodly folio volume of some six or seven hundred pages, closely printed, and containing about seventy thousand lines, for the most part of heroic verse, entitled 'All the Works of John Taylor, the Water-Poet, being sixty and three in number, collected into one volume by the Author.' John Taylor, who made this collection of



John Taylor, the Water-Poet.

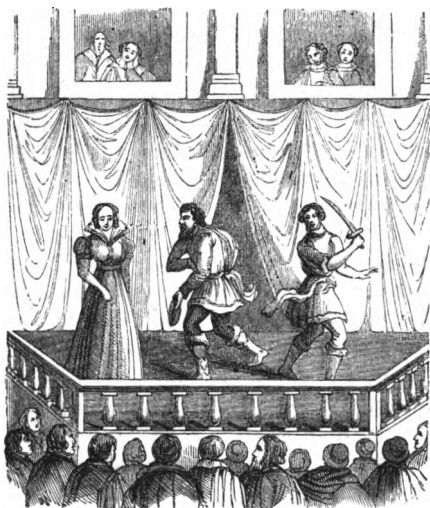
his tracts in 1630, was literally a Thames waterman, working daily for his bread. The waterman's verses are not so ambitious as those of the Venetian gondolier, Antonio Bianchi, who wrote an epic poem in twelve cantos; but they possess a great deal of rough vigour, and altogether open to us very curious views of London manners in the early part of the seventeenth century. Taylor is never ashamed of his trade; and he cannot endure it to be sup-

posed that his waterman's vocation is incompatible with the sturdiest assertion of his rights to the poetical dignity. In one of his controversies—for he generally had some stiff quarrel on hand with witlings who looked down upon him—he says, addressing William Fennor, ‘the king’s rhyming poet,’

‘Thou say’st that Poetry descended is
From Poverty: thou tak’st thy mark amiss.
In spite of weal or woe, or want of pelf,
It is a kingdom of content itself.’

Such a spirit would go far to make a writer whose works would be worth looking at two centuries after the praise or abuse of his contemporaries was forgotten; and so homely John Taylor, amongst the race of satirists and manner-painters, is not to be despised. ‘The gentleman-like sculler at the Hope on the Bankside’ (as he makes Fennor call him) lived in a poetical atmosphere. He probably had the good fortune to ferry Shakspeare from Whitehall to Paris Garden; he boasts of his acquaintance with Ben Jonson: and the cause of his great quarrel with Fennor is thus set forth: ‘Be it known unto all men, that I, John Taylor, waterman, did agree with William Fennor (who arrogantly and falsely entitles himself the King’s Majesty’s Rhyming Poet) to answer me at a trial of wit, on the 7th of October last, 1614, at the Hope Stage on the Bankside; . . . and when the day came that the play should have been performed, the house being filled with a great audience who had spent their money extraordinarily, then this companion for an ass ran away and left me for a fool, amongst thousands of critical censurers.’ Taylor had taken his waterman’s position in a spot where there was a thriving trade. The Bankside was the landing-place to which the inhabitants of Westminster, and of the Strand, and of London west of Paul’s, would daily throng in the days of the Drama’s glory; when the Globe could boast of the highest of the land amongst its visitors; when Essex and Southampton, out of favour at court, repaired thither to listen, unsatiated, to the lessons of the great master of

philosophy ; when crowds of earnest people, not intent only upon amusement, went there to study their country's history, or learn the 'humanities' in a school where the poet could dare to proclaim universal truths in an age of individual dissimulation ; and when even the idle profligate might for a moment forget his habits of self-indulgence, and be aroused into sympathy with his fellows, by the art which then triumphed, and still triumphs, over all competition. Other places of amusement were on the Bankside—the Paris Garden, the Rose, and the Hope playhouses ;



View of the old Stage and Balcony.

and in earlier times, and even when the drama had reached its highest point of popular attraction, on the same spot were the 'Bear-houses'—places of resort not only for the rude multitude, but to which Elizabeth carried the French ambassador to exhibit the courage of English bull-dogs. Imagine Southwark the peculiar ground of summer theatres and *circi*, with no bridge but that of London, and we may easily understand that John Taylor sang the praises of the river with his whole heart :—

‘ But noble Thames, whilst I can hold a pen,
 I will divulge thy glory unto men :
 Thou, in the morning when my coin is scant,
 Before the evening doth supply my want.’ *

But the empire of the watermen was destined to be invaded ; and its enemies approached to its conquest, after the Tartarian fashion, with mighty chariots crowded with multitudes. Taylor was not slow to complain of this change. In his ‘ Thief,’ published in 1622, he tells us that,

‘ When Queen Elizabeth came to the crown,
 A coach in England then was scarcely known ;’

and he adds, ‘ ’tis not fit’ that

‘ Fulsome madams, and new scurvy squires,
 Should jolt the streets at pomp, at their desires,
 Like great triumphant Tamburlaines, each day,
 Drawn with the pamper’d jades of Belgia,
 That almost all the streets are chok’d outright,
 Where men can hardly pass, from morn till night,
 Whilst watermen want work.’

In a prose tract, published in the following year, Taylor goes forth to the attack upon ‘ coaches’ with great vehemence, but with a conviction that his warfare will not be successful : ‘ I do not inveigh against any coaches that belong to persons of worth or quality, but only against the caterpillar swarm of hirelings. *They have undone my poor trade, whereof I am a member ;* and though I look for no reformation, yet I expect the benefit of an old proverb, “ Give the losers leave to speak.” ’ † He maintains that ‘ this infernal swarm of trade-spillers (coaches) have so overrun the land that we can get no living upon the water ; for I dare truly affirm that every day in any term, especially if the court be at Whitehall, they do rob us of our livings, and carry five hundred sixty fares daily from us.’ This is a very exact computation, formed perhaps upon personal enumeration of the number of hired coaches passing to

* Praise of Hemp-seed.

† The World runs on Wheels.

Westminster. He naturally enough contrasts the quiet of his own highway with the turmoil of the land-thoroughfare : 'I pray you look into the streets, and the chambers or lodgings in Fleet Street or the Strand, how they are pestered with them (coaches), especially after a mask or a play at the court, where even the very earth quakes and trembles, the casements shatter, tatter, and clatter, and such a confused noise is made, so that a man can neither sleep, speak, hear, write, or eat his dinner or supper quiet for them.' The irruption of coaches must have been as fearful a calamity to John Taylor and his fraternity in those days, as the establishment of railroads 'has been to postmasters and postboys in our own. These transitions diminish something of the pleasure with which we must ever contemplate a state of progress ; but the evil is temporary and the good is permanent, and when we look back upon the past we learn to estimate the evil and the good upon broad principles. Half a century hence, a London without railroads, that inns and stages might be maintained, would appear as ludicrous a notion as that of a London without carriages, that John Taylor might row his wherry in prosperity, gladdened every day by the smiles of ladies, 'whose ancient lodgings were near St. Katherine's, the Bankside, Lambeth Marsh, Westminster, Whitefryars, Coleharbor, or any other place near the Thames, who were wont to take a boat and air themselves upon the water.'

Of the elder vehicles that preceded coaches, whether rejoicing in the name of chare, car, chariot, caroch, or whirlicote, we have little here to say. Their dignity was not much elevated above that of the waggon ; and they were scarcely calculated to move about the streets of London, which are described in a Paving Act of 1539 as 'very foul, and full of pits and sloughs, very perilous and noyous, as well for the king's subjects on horseback as on foot, and with carriages.' There appears little doubt that the coach first appeared about 1564 ; although the question was subsequently raised 'whether the devil brought tobacco into England in a coach, or else brought a coach in a fog or mist

of tobacco.* Stow thus describes the introduction of this novelty, which was to change the face of English society :

‘ In the year 1564, Guiliam Boonen, a Dutchman, became the queen’s coachman ; and was the first that brought the use of coaches into England. After a while, divers great ladies, with as great jealousy of the queen’s displeasure, made them coaches, and rid up and down the countries in them, to the great admiration of all the beholders ; but then by little and little they grew usual among the nobility and others of sort, and within twenty years became a great trade of coach-making.’

In little more than thirty years a bill was brought into Parliament ‘ to restrain the excessive use of coaches.’

One of the most signal examples we can find of the growing importance of the middle classes is exhibited in their rapid appropriation to their own use of the new luxury which the highest in the land ventured at first to indulge in, timidly, and with ‘ jealousy’ of the queen’s displeasure. It was in vain that Parliament legislated against their ‘ excessive use ;’ it was equally in vain that the citizens and citizens’ wives who aspired to ride in them were ridiculed by the wits and hooted by the mob. As in the diffusion of every other convenience or luxury introduced by the rich, the distinction of riding in a coach soon ceased to be a distinction. The proud Duke of Buckingham, seeing that coaches with two horses were used by all, and that the nobility had only the exclusive honour of four horses, set up a coach with six horses ; and then ‘ the stout Earl of Northumberland’ established one with eight horses.† Massinger, in ‘ The City Madam,’ exhibits Anne Frugal demanding of her courtly admirer—

‘ My caroch

Drawn by six Flanders mares, my coachman, groom,
Postillion, and footman.’

The high-born and the wealthy soon found that those who

* Taylor.

† See Wilson’s Memoirs.

had been long accustomed to trudge through the miry streets, or on rare occasions to bestride an ambling nag, would make a ready way with money to appropriate the new luxury to themselves. Coaches soon came to be hired. They were to be found in the suburban districts and in inns within the town. Taylor (he writes in 1623) says, 'I have heard of a gentlewoman who sent her man to Smithfield from Charing Cross, to hire a coach to carry her to Whitehall; another did the like from Ludgate-hill, to be carried to see a play at the Blackfriars.' He imputes this anxiety for the accommodation of a coach to the pride of the good people, and he was probably right. He gives us a ludicrous example of the extent of this passion in the case of 'two leash of oyster-wives,' who 'hired a coach to carry them to the green-goose fair at Stratford-the-Bow; and as they were hurried betwixt Aldgate and Mile-end, they were so be-madam'd, be-mistress'd, and ladyfied by the beggars, that the foolish women began to swell with a proud supposition or imaginary greatness, and gave all their money to the mendicanting canters.*' The rich visitors who came to London from the country were great employers of coaches; and Taylor tells us that the 'Proclamation concerning the retiring of the gentry out of the city into their countries' somewhat 'cleared the streets of these way-stopping whirligigs; for a man now might walk without bidding *Stand up, ho!* by a fellow that can scarcely either go or stand himself.'† It is easy to conceive that in those days of ill-paved and narrow streets the coaches must have been a great impediment to the goings-on of London business. Our Water-Poet is alive to all these inconveniences: 'Butchers cannot pass with their cattle for them; market folks, which bring provision of victuals to the city, are stopped, stayed, and hindered; carts or wains, with their necessary wares, are debarred and letted; the milkmaid's ware is often spilt in the dirt;' and then he describes how the proud mistresses, sitting in their 'hell-cart' (Evelyn tells us this was the Londoner's name for a

* World runs on Wheels, p. 239.

† Id.

coach long after), ride grinning and deriding at the people 'crowded and shrouded up against stalls and shops.' D'Avenant, some forty or fifty years later, notices the popular feeling: 'Master Londoner, be not so hot against coaches.' But the coaches flourished, in spite of the populace. The carman might drive up against them, and the coachman, 'with six nobles sitting together,' might be compelled to 'stop, and give place to as many barrels of beer.'* They flourished, too, in spite of the roads. 'It is a most uneasy kind of passage in coaches on the paved streets of London, wherein men and women are so tost, tumbled, jumbled, rumbled, and crossing of kennels, dung-hills, and uneven ways.'† It is affirmed in a pamphlet quoted by Markland, entitled 'Coach and Sedan,' that in 1636 the coaches 'in London, the suburbs, and within four miles compass without, are reckoned to the number of six thousand and odd.'

It was two years before the date of this calculation that the first hackney-coach *stand* was established in London. Garrard thus describes it in a letter to Strafford: 'I cannot omit to mention any new thing that comes up amongst us though never so trivial: here is one Captain Baily, he hath been a sea-captain, but now lives on the land, about this city, where he tries experiments. He hath erected, according to his ability, some four hackney-coaches, put his men in livery, and appointed them to stand at the May-pole in the Strand, giving them instructions at what rates to carry men into several parts of the town, where all day they may be had. Other hackney-men seeing this way, they flocked to the same place, and perform their journeys at the same rate. So that sometimes there is twenty of them together, which disperse up and down, that they and others are to be had everywhere, as watermen are to be had by the water-side. Everybody is much pleased with it. For, whereas before coaches could not be had but at great rates, now a man may have one *much cheaper*.'‡

* D'Avenant.

† Taylor.

‡ Strafford's Letters, vol. i. p. 227.

Writing two months after, the same retailer of news says, 'Here is a proclamation coming forth about the reformation of hackney-coaches, and ordering of other coaches about London. One thousand nine hundred was the number of hackney-coaches of London, base lean jades, unworthy to be seen in so brave a city, or to stand about a king's court.' In 1635 he writes, 'Here is a proclamation coming forth, to prohibit all hackney-coaches to pass up and down in London streets; out of town they may go at pleasure as heretofore.' It is perfectly clear that the king might proclaim, and that his subjects would not hearken to him, as long as they found hackney-coaches essential to their business or pleasure. We have an amusing example of the inefficiency of such meddling, twenty-five years after. Pepys, in his Diary of 1660, writes, 'Notwithstanding this is the first day of the king's proclamation against hackney-coaches coming into the streets to stand to be hired, yet I got one to carry me home.' We think we hear his cunning chuckle as he hires the coach, and laughs at the law-makers.

When Prince Charles, afterwards Charles I., returned from his faithless wooing of the daughter of Philip IV., he brought with him three sedan-chairs of curious workmanship: Such a mode of conveyance was unknown to the English. They had seen the fair and the feeble carried in a box, supported by a horse before and a horse behind; and they felt, therefore, something like what we have felt at the sight of an election rabble harnessed to the wheels of a popular candidate—they felt that men were degraded, when the favourite of James and Charles, Buckingham, first moved into the streets of London, borne in his sedan on men's shoulders. 'Baby Charles' had presented 'Steenie' with two of these luxuries of foreign growth. Wilson says, 'When Buckingham came to be carried in a chair upon men's shoulders, the clamour and noise of it was so extravagant, that the people would rail on him in the streets, loathing that men should be brought to as servile a condition as horses.' The very year of the expedition of

Charles and Buckingham to Spain, 1623, was Massinger's 'Bondman' produced. Charles and the favourite returned to London early in October; the play was first acted on the 3rd of December. It contains these lines:—

'Tis a strong-limb'd knave :
 My father bought him for my sister's *litter*.—
 O pride of women ! Coaches are too common ;
 They surfeit in the happiness of peace,
 And ladies think they keep not state enough
 If, for their pomp and ease, they are not borne
 In triumph *on men's shoulders*.'

Gilchrist and Gifford think that this was an allusion to Buckingham. If so, and there can be little doubt of the matter, the vain favourite must have paraded with his new luxury, 'degrading Englishmen into slaves and beasts of burden' (as a writer of that day expresses himself), upon the instant of his return.

But the popular clamour was as ineffectual against the chairs as against the coaches. In 1634, Garrard, writing to Lord Strafford, says, 'Here is also another project for carrying people up and down in close chairs, for the sole doing whereof Sir Sander Duncombe, a traveller, now a pensioner, hath obtained a patent from the king, and hath forty or fifty making ready for use.' The coachmen and the chairmen soon got up a pretty quarrel; and in 1636 we find published the amusing tract, entitled 'Coach and Sedan, pleasantly disputing for place and precedence.' The title exhibits to us the form of the sedan, with its bearers *touting* for custom—and we have a description of the conveyance and its men, which, with the engraving which accompanies it, clearly enough shows that the chairmen no longer bore the 'litter' on their shoulders, palanquin-fashion, but that they quickly adopted the mode of carrying which lasted for two hundred years.

The revolutions of half a century made wonderful changes in the aspect of the Thames. The Restoration found the famous old theatres swept away, and the ancient

mansions towards the east invaded by the traders. Wharfs took the place of trim gardens; and if the nobleman still kept his state boat, the dirty coal-barge was anchored by its side. D'Avenant has given a description of this state of things, which he puts into the mouth of a Frenchman:—

'You would think me a malicious traveller if I should still gaze on your mis-shapen streets and take no notice of the beauty of your river; therefore I will pass the importunate noise of your watermen (who snatch at fares as if they were to catch prisoners, plying the gentry so uncivilly, as if they never had rowed any other passengers but bearwards), and now step into one of your peascod-boats, whose tilts are not so sumptuous as the roofs of *gondolas*, nor, when you are within, are you at the ease of *chaise à bras*. The commodity and trade of your river belongs to yourselves; but give a stranger leave to share in the pleasure of it, which will hardly be in the prospect or freedom of air; unless prospect, consisting of variety, be made up with here a palace, there a wood-yard, here a garden, there a brewhouse; here dwells a lord, there a dyer, and between both *duomo comune*. If freedom of air be inferred in the liberty of the subject, where every private man hath authority, for his own profit, to smoke up a magistrate, then the air of your Thames is open enough, because 'tis equally free.'*

It is easy to perceive that during the progress of these changes—all indicating the advance of the middle classes, and the general extension of public accommodation and individual comfort—the river was every day becoming less and less a general highway for passengers. The streets from Westminster to St. Paul's were paved after a fashion; the foot-passenger could make his way, though with some danger and difficulty; and the coach, though sometimes stuck in a hole, and sometimes rudely jostled by the brewer's cart, *did* progress through the Strand and Holborn. The time was approaching when the great capital would find out that one bridge was somewhat insufficient, and

* Entertainment at Rutland House, D'Avenant's Works, 1673, p. 352.

that ferries and wherries were uncertain and inconvenient modes of passage from one shore to another.

Howell, amongst his enumeration of the attractions of the city, says, 'What variety of bowling-alleys there are!' And when the idler was tired of this sport, and would turn his back even upon shuffle-board and cock-fighting, he had nothing to do but to step down to Queenhithe or the Temple, and have an afternoon of such recreation as can now only be found at a distance of five miles from London Bridge. 'Go to the river,' continues Howell; 'what a pleasure it is to go thereon in the summer-time, in boat or barge! or to go a floundering among the fishermen!' Conceive an angler, stuck under one of the piers of Waterloo Bridge, patiently expecting to be rewarded with a salmon, or at least a barbel. Yet such things were a century ago. There are minute regulations of the 'Company of Free Fishermen' to be observed in the western parts of the Thames, which clearly show that the preservation of the fish, even in the highway between London and Westminster, was a matter of importance; and very stringent, therefore, are the restrictions against using eel-spears, and wheels, and 'angle-rods with more than two hooks.*' There is a distinct provision that fishermen were not to come nearer London Bridge than the Old Swan on the north bank, and St. Mary Overies on the south. Especially was enactment made that no person should 'bend over any net, during the time of flood, whereby both *salmons*, and other kind of fish, may be hindered from swimming upwards.' Woe for the anglers! The *salmons* and the *swans* have both quitted the bills of mortality; and they are gone where there are clear runnels, and pebbly bottoms, and quiet nooks under shadowing ozers, and where the water-lily spreads its broad leaf and its snowy flower, and the sewer empties not itself to pollute every tide, and the never-ceasing din of human life is heard not, and the paddle of the steam-boat dashes no wave upon the shore.

* Stow's London, book v.

THE YOUNGER SON.

THE Lyffe of Sir Peter Carewe, late of Mohones Otrey, in the countie of Devon, Knyghte, whoe dyed at Rosse, in Irelande, the 27th of November, 1575, was read to the Society of Antiquaries of London, November 29th, 1838. At that reading, the yawning must have been terrific—the sleep profound. This ‘Lyffe’—‘collected by John Vowell, al’s Hoker, of the Cetie of Excester, Gent., partly upon the credyble reporte of others, and partly which he sawe and knewe hyme selffe’—occupies fifty-eight quarto pages of the twenty-eighth volume of the ‘Archæologia.’ The world might have remained profoundly ignorant of the doings of Sir Peter Carewe, but for the exhumation of this MS. of John Vowell; and in truth this ‘Lyffe’ might have shared the common fate of antiquarian discoveries—a digging-up, and a re-interment—had there not been some lasting and general interest in the narrative. The early history of Peter Carewe is a remarkable example of ancient educational discipline. His story comes unbidden before us, when we think that ‘Wisdom doth live with children round her knees’—loving, and beloved. What was the daily life of a child in the days of Henry the Eighth? Shadow of Peter Carewe, instruct us!

About the year 1526, there is stir in the household of Thomas Hunte, draper, and Alderman of Exeter. Peter, a son of the worshipful Sir William Carewe, is expected to arrive, in charge of a faithful servant of the house, from Mohones Otrey. He is to lodge with Thomas Hunte, and daily to attend the grammar-school of the city. ‘Wife,’ says the alderman, ‘this is a heavy charge; the boy, I am

given to know, is pert and forward. He is the youngest son, and his father looks to his learning to bring him to some advancement. Sir William is a hard man. This is a heavy charge.'

The boy comes on horseback, the servant having a leading rein, greatly to Peter's annoyance. They stop at the draper's threshold. It is a mean wooden house; but well stocked with West of England stuffs. 'Welcome, young sir,' quoth the draper's wife. 'I am commanded by Sir William,' says the servant, 'to require you to keep a close eye upon my young master. You are to stand in the place of his father, Master Hunte. He must have no rude companions: he must go straight from your house to the school, and from the school to your house. If he be truant, flog him!' With this solace was Peter Carewe confided to the alderman.

We see the shadow of poor Peter in the grammar-school. One Freer is master; he is counted to be a very hard and a cruel master. Daily is that unhappy boy lacerated; no stripes can move him to learn. He sits doggedly with the open pages of 'Syntaxis' before him; but he will make no agreement between the nominative case and the verb. The noontide meal of Thomas Hunte is by him neglected; he is off to the pleasant fields that lie around the city. He hath a book of ballads in his vest, which tells of the 'actes and faits' of chivalry—of the knight's prowess, and the lady's love. Hunte in vain lectures—Freer in vain flogs. At last 'he would never keep his school, but is daily truant, and always ranging.' On a certain day good Thomas Hunte is seriously alarmed—the boy has been missing through a summer's morning, noon, and eve. The alderman hath sent abroad to seek him, and, as twilight approaches, goes forth himself. Behind a buttress of the city wall is Peter hiding. 'Oh, varlet!' cries the furious draper, 'have I caught you?' 'Not yet,' replies the truant. The boy climbs the wall—he looks out from the top of the highest turret: 'Let me be! Keep down. If you press upon me, I will surely cast myself headlong over

the wall, and then I shall break my neck; and thou shalt be hanged, because thou makest me to leap down.'

In a few days after, there is a strange sight in the streets of Exeter. Sir William Carewe has once more sat in the draper's best room. The boy stands trembling before him. No word is spoken between father and son; a servant is in the background, with a chain and a collar. 'Bind him,' is the one brief command. Through the streets of Exeter is the rebellious boy carried about, as one of his father's hounds; 'and they lead him home to Mohones Otrey like a dog.' The degradation does not end when the boy enters the house of his ancestors in this bestial guise. Does the pitying mother intercede for her youngest child? If she does—and we see a dim shadow of a lady kneeling before a silent husband—that intercession is bootless. Peter Carewe abides in a filthy outhouse, coupled to a hound.

Violent remedies must necessarily be brief. Peter Carewe and the hound part company. Another proof of the rebellious boy is to be made. He sits upon a form in St. Paul's School, but he is still 'more desirous of liberty than of learning;' and 'do the schoolmaster what he would, he in no wise can frame the young Peter to smell to a book, or to like of any schooling.' The father again comes to town. The sensible schoolmaster persuades him to put his son to some active employ. In Paul's Walk is Sir William musing; the boy standing in awe behind him. Sir William there meets with an old friend, then serving in the French court. This friend offers to take the boy for a page, and use him like a gentleman, and do as much for him as if he were his own child. The offer is accepted. The father is rid of his troublesome son—the son is freed from the terror of his father.

Peter Carewe is for some time caressed by his new friend. He has gay clothes—feeds well—partakes of courtly exercises. And yet Peter is ill at ease. He is little suited for routine duties. He sinks, gradually from

the hall to the stable. His fine apparel is worn and spent. His master will provide him no more. He becomes 'a mule, to attend his master's mules, and so in the order of a mule did attend and serve his master. Howbeit, the young boy, having by these means some liberty, is contented with his estate.' Oh, Peter! we see thy shadow, as thou art roystering with thy brother mules—learning their uncourtly language, treasuring up their low experiences, but at length doing something useful. Thou hast work to do, and thou dost it. Thy real education is beginning. Thou hast hours of leisure, and then thou learnest many a virelay, and art merry in the dance; and thou redest for delight, and not at another's command—thou redest Froissart and Comines;—gradually thou lookest back with shame on thy past obduracy. We see thy shadow weeping, for thou art thinking of thy mother.

There is a gentleman come with letters of commendation from Henry VIII. to Francis I., and he is received of the French king, and has a charge of horse given him. It is John Carewe, of Haccombe, a kinsman to Sir William Carewe. He is riding to the court, and, coming before the court-gate, where there are sundry lackeys and horse-boys playing together, he hears a boy call out, 'Carewe Angloys! Carewe Angloys!'—'Which is Carewe Angloys?' says John Carewe, of Haccombe. Come forth, our Peter! Thou art evil apparelled, thy clothes are all to-ragged and very simple, the stains of the stable are upon thee. Who art thou? 'I am the youngest son of Sir William Carewe, of Devon, Knight. My name is Peter. I offended my father, who sent me here to be a page. My master was not pleased with me, and I am now a poor muleter.'—'Thou injured boy, I will be to thee as a father.'

Peter Carewe is now a willing scholar. Kindness, which opened his heart, has fashioned his intellect. His kinsman and the bold boy have no break in their affections. They march together in the army which Francis I. sends against Charles V. On the march, John Carewe dies; but Peter is not desolate. He has made friends. The Marquis of

Saluces takes him into his company. At the siege of Pavia, Francis I. is taken prisoner, the marquis is slain, the French army is scattered. In his rough career, Peter has attained that practical wisdom which the school of Exeter might have failed to teach him. He has learnt to act for himself. He goes boldly to the emperor's camp; and becomes a favourite with the Prince of Orange. The boy that was coupled with a hound is grown into a young man, 'so honest in his conditions, so courteous in his behaviour, so forward in all honest exercises, and especially in all prowess and virtue, that he has stolen the hearts and gained the love of all persons unto him, and especially of the princess.'

A few years pass on, and Peter Carewe is in England. He has come with letters from the Princess of Orange to the court of Henry VIII. He is taken at once into favour; for young Carewe 'has not only the French tongue, which is as natural to him as his own English tongue, but he is very witty, and full of life.' And so, he is—first a henchman, and then one of the Privy Chamber. But Peter has natural longings, which hard usage has not extinguished. He asks permission to make a journey; and he sets forth with a goodly company of attendants.

Sir William and Lady Carewe are sitting alone in a parlour of their manor-house of Mohones Otrey. There is a trampling of horse without. In a few minutes the door is opened, and a gentleman, dressed in all the costly luxury of the period, and surrounded with the gayest of followers, falls upon his knees. 'My father, my mother, your blessing!' He holds out a letter. Sir William is dumb with surprise; he with difficulty whispers to his wife, 'It is Peter Carewe!'—'No—no—my poor Peter is dead and forlorn.' 'Mother, father, it is indeed your Peter!'

Thus leave we the shadow of Peter Carewe. Of his after worth and greatness let the record of Master Vowell suffice. He did creditable things on land and at sea. The latter chivalry produced many such heroes. His shadow never comes before us in its panoply of loyalty and valour. But we have seen him, in an idle hour, as he is described

by his biographer:—‘The king himself being much delighted to sing, and Sir Peter Carewe having a pleasant voice, the king would very often use him to sing with him certain songs they call *fremen* * songs, as namely, “By the bank as I lay,” and “As I walked the wood so wild.”’

* Quære—*threemen* ? The ‘three-man-song’ of ‘The Winter’s Tale.’

HANG OUT YOUR LIGHTS.

It was on the vigil of St. John the Baptist, in the year 1510, that two young men wearing the dress of the King's Guard—the rich and picturesque uniform which has survived the changes of three centuries, to linger about the court of England, and preserve its gorgeous dignity, however vulgarised into associations with beef-eaters and showmen—that two handsome and soldierly-looking young men came to the water-gate at Westminster, and, in answer to the 'Eastward-ho' of the watermen, jumped into a common wherry. There were not many boats at the stairs, and those which were still unhired were very different in their appearance and their comforts from the royal barges which were moored at some little distance. The companions looked at each other with a peculiar expression before they sat down on the uncushioned and dirty bench of the wherry; but the boisterous laugh which burst forth from one of them appeared to remove all scruples, and the boat was soon adrift in the ebbing tide.

The evening was very lovely. The last sunbeam was dancing on the waters, and the golden light upon the spires of the city was fast fading away. Suddenly, however, a redder light came up out of the depths of the street, and wreaths of gray smoke mingled with the glare. The Thames was crowded with boats, and voices of merriment were heard amidst the distant sounds of drum and trumpet. The common stairs or bridges were thronged with people landing. The wherry in which sat the two guardsmen ran in to a private stair at Bridewell; and, with the same hearty laugh, they stepped into a spacious garden. 'Charles,' said the more boisterous of the companions, 'this will be a snug nest for the right witty Almoner

when Empson's head is off.' In a few minutes a noble-looking person, dressed in a sober but costly suit, like a wealthy citizen, joined them, making a profound reverence. 'No ceremony,' exclaimed he of the loud voice; and then, making an effort to speak low, 'His Highness is safe in the palace, and we are two of his faithful guards who would see the Midsummer-watch set. Have you a dagger under your russet-coat, my good Almoner? for the watch, they say, does not fear the rogues any more than the gallows.' It was Wolsey, then upon the lower rounds of the ladder of preferment, who answered Henry in the gay tone of his master. Brandon, who, in spite of his generous nature, did not quite like the accommodating churchman, was scarcely so familiar with him. The three, however, all gaily enough passed onward through the spacious gardens of Empson's deserted palace, which covered the ground now known as Dorset Street and Salisbury Square; and, with a master-key, with which the prosperous Almoner was already provided, they sallied forth into the public street, and, crossing Fleet Bridge, pursued their way towards West Cheap.*

Ludgate was not closed. In the open space under the city wall was an enormous bonfire, which was reflected from the magnificent steeple of Paul's. Looking up the hill there was another bonfire in the open space before the cathedral, which threw its deep light upon every pinnacle of the vast edifice, and gleamed in its many windows as if a thousand tapers were blazing within its choir and transepts. The street was full of light. Over the doorways of the houses were 'lamps of glass, with oil burning in them all the night;' and 'some hung out branches of iron, curiously wrought, containing hundreds of lamps lighted

* 'On Midsummer-Eve, at night, King Henry came privily into West Cheap, of London, being clothed in one of the coats of his guard.'—(Stow's 'Annals,' under date 1510.) It is not likely that Henry, though bold enough, would so far yield to the impulses which belong to a youth of nineteen as to go alone. Brandon had been his companion from childhood; Wolsey had already learned to minister to his pleasures as one mode of governing him. The patent by which the great churchman obtained Empson's house is dated 1510.

at once.* Before the houses were tables set out, on which were placed ponderous cakes and flagons of ale and wine, 'unexercised by lungs;' and the sturdy apprentices, who by day were wont to cry 'What lack ye?' threw open their blue cloaks, disclosing their white hose, with a knowing look of independence, as they courteously invited the passer-by to partake of their dainties. Over the doors hung the delicate branches of the graceful birch, with wreaths of lilies and St. John's-wort; and there were suspended pots of the green orpine, in the bending of whose leaves the maiden could read her fate in love. Wending their way through the throng, the three men of the west felt, the two younger especially, something of that pleasure which human beings can scarcely avoid feeling at the sight of happiness in others. Henry whispered to Wolsey, 'This is a merry land;' and the courtier answered, 'You have made it so.'

The three visitors of the city moved slowly along with the dense crowd towards the Cross in West Cheap. They there stationed themselves. The liveries which two of them wore would have secured them respect, if their lofty bearing had not appeared to command it. The galleries of the houses and the windows were filled with ladies. Between the high gabled roofs stood venturous boys and servants. Tapestry floated from the walls. Within was ever and anon heard the cadence of many voices singing in harmony. Then came a loud sound of trumpets; and a greater light than that of the flickering bonfires was seen in the distance, and the windows became more crowded, and the songs ceased within the dwellings.

The procession which was approaching was magnificent enough to afford the highest gratification to one at least of the three spectators that we have described. It suggested, however, the consideration that it did not belong to himself, and threw no particular glory round his throne and person. But, nevertheless, his curiosity was greatly stimulated; and that love of pomp which he had already begun to indulge in, processions, and jousts, and tournaments, could not

* Stow's Survey.

fail of receiving some delight from the remarkable scene that was before him. He was, as Cavendish has described him, 'a young, lusty, and courageous prince, entering into the flower of pleasant youth.' His amusements were manly and intellectual, 'exercising himself daily in shooting, singing, dancing, wrestling, casting of the bar, playing at the recorders, flute, virginals, and in setting of songs and making of ballads.*' The future sensual tyrant is not readily seen in this description. But here, on Midsummer-Eve, in 1510, was Henry standing beside the cross in West Cheap, and mixing unknown amongst his subjects, like the Haroon el-Rasheed of the 'Thousand and One Nights.' Onward came the Marching Watch, winding into Cheap from the little conduit by Paul's Gate. Here, literally,

'The front of Heaven was full of fiery shapes,
Of burning cressets.'

The pitchy ropes borne aloft in iron frames sent up their tongues of fire and wreaths of smoke in volumes which showed, afar off, like the light of a burning city. Stow tells us that for the 'furniture' of the Marching Watch there were appointed seven hundred cressets; besides which every constable, amounting to two hundred and forty, had his cresset. Each cresset had a man to bear it and another to serve it, so that the cresset-train amounted in number to almost two thousand men. This was, indeed, civic pomp upon a splendid scale. A poet of the next century, whose name is almost unknown in the ordinary catalogues of English poetry, but who has written with more elegance and taste than half of those we call classics—Richard Niccols, in a performance called 'London's Artillery,' has the following very beautiful lines descriptive of the bonfires and cresset-lights of the great festival of the Summer Solstice:—

* Hall.

'The wakeful shepherd by his flock in field,
With wonder at that time far off beheld
The wanton shine of thy triumphant fires
Playing upon the tops of thy tall spires.'



The Watch, with 'cressets' and 'beacons.'—Grouped from Hollar.

'Mingled with the cresset-bearers came on two thousand men of the Marching Watch, some mounted and some on foot. There were 'demi-lances' on great horses; gunners with their harquebuses and wheel-locks; archers in white

coats, with bows bent and sheafs of arrows by their sides; pike-men in bright corslets; and bill-men with aprons of mail. Following these came the constables of the Watch, each in bright harness gleaming from beneath his scarlet jorinet* and his golden chain, with his henchman following him, and his minstrel before him, and his cresset-light by his side; and then came the waits of the city, and morris-dancers footing it to their merry notes; and then, in due order, the mayor himself on horseback, and his sword-bearer, his henchmen, his harnessed footmen, his giants, and his pageants. 'The Sheriffs' Watches,' says Stow, 'came one after the other in like order, but not so large in number as the Mayor's.' Niccols, still apostrophising London, thus describes this part of the solemnity :—

'Thy goodly buildings, that till then did hide
 Their rich array, open'd their windows wide,
 Where kings, great peers, and many a noble dame,
 Whose bright, pearl-glittering robes did mock the flame
 Of the night's burning lights, did sit to see
 How every senator, in his degree,
 Adorn'd with shining gold and purple weeds,
 And stately mounted on rich-trapped steeds,
 Their guard attending, through the streets did ride
 Before their foot-bands, grac'd with glittering pride
 Of rich gilt arms.'

Onward swept the mighty cavalcade past the Cross at Cheap, along Cornhill, and by Leadenhall to Aldgate. It was to return by Fenchurch Street and Gracious Street, and again into Cornhill and through Cheapside. The multitude thronged after it, but the three strangers remained almost alone. 'This costs gold,' said Wolsey. 'And it is worth the cost,' replied the king. 'Would they fight,' said Brandon, 'these demi-lances and archers?' 'Indeed they would,' said Wolsey: and turning round to the king, 'such men have fought with your Highness's grand-sires; and the cry of *Clubs* of the blue-cloaks is as fearful a rallying-cry as that of *St. George*.' 'Come,' said the king, 'we must homeward. Are the streets watched, or shall we

* Probably scarf.

have to knock a knave or two on the pate?" The streets were watched. They again passed Ludgate; and as they descended Fleet Hill they found the lamps still burning before the doors, but the hospitable tables were almost deserted. At due intervals stood a constable in bright harness, surrounded by his footmen and his cresset-bearer; and as they went onward through Fleet Street, and looked to the right and left, up the narrow lanes, there was still the cresset gleaming on the armour. 'We are safe to-night,' said the king. 'This is a glorious affair, and I shall bring her Highness to see it on St. Peter's Eve. How looks the city, my grave Almoner, on other than festival nights?' 'It is a melancholy place, your Highness. After curfew not a light to be seen: the one cresset in a street makes it more gloomy; and masterless men cut purses in the dark, while the light-bearer tells the rogues where there is no watch.' 'Ha!' exclaimed the king. 'This should be remedied,' added the statesman. 'The cost of one Midsummer-Eve would double the watch for the rest of the year.' 'Ho,' said Harry, 'hang up the thieves, and let the true men keep in their houses.' 'They break into the houses,' said Wolsey. 'We will tell our justices to spare none of them,' replied the king. They were by this time at Temple Bar. There were three led-horses waiting, and a dozen foot-men with lighted torches. Slowly they rode, for the way was rough, past St. Clement's, and through the Strand, and by Charing Cross to the palace-gates. Here and there was seen a solitary bonfire, but there was no rush of population as in the city. The large palatial houses were dark and silent. The river, which ever and anon lay spread before them as they looked upon it through the broad open spaces of its bank, was red with the reflection of the city fires. The courtier-priest was at his master's stirrup as he alighted; and Henry whispered, 'Come to me to-morrow. Our people want Empson's head, and the sooner you get his house the better.' With a loud laugh his Highness and Brandon vanished into an inner court of the palace, and the Almoner rode thoughtfully to his lodgings.

During the reign of Henry VIII., as Harrison tells us, he hung up, of great thieves, of petty thieves, and rogues, three score and twelve thousand. This was a wholesale mode of dispensing with a preventive police, though we doubt whether the prison and the gallows were cheaper than lighting and watching. The same graphic pen, writing in 1586, adds :—‘ He seemed for a while greatly to have terrified the rest ; but since his death the number of them is so increased, that, except some better order be taken, or the law already made be better executed, such as dwell in uplandish towns and little villages shall live but in small safety and rest.’* London, we have no doubt, had a pretty equal share of discomfort and danger. The time was passed when it could be enjoined, as by the statute of Edward I., ‘ that none be so hardy as to be found going or wandering about the streets of the city after curfew tolled at St. Martin’s-le-Grand with sword or buckler or other arms for doing mischief, or whereof evil suspicion might arise, nor in any other manner, unless he be a great man or other lawful person of good repute, or their certain messengers, having their warrants to go from one to another, with lantern in hand.’ The progress of industry had rendered it necessary that others besides great men and their accredited messengers should go about at night, and not be considered as malefactors. Thirty years after the Midsummer-Eve of 1510, Henry VIII. put down the Marching Watch, ‘ considering the great charges of the citizens :’ but the good old lovers of pageantry would not so readily part with it, and it was several times attempted to be revived, till, in 1569, it was altogether abandoned ; and it was determined ‘ in the room thereof to have a substantial standing watch for the safety and preservation of the city.’† It is curious, in these our own days of police and gas-lights, to look back to the means by which the safety and preservation of the city were secured. The watchman had gradually been transformed from a sturdy constable in harness into a

* Description of England, book ii. chap. 11.

† Stow’s Survey.

vener ble personage bearing halberd and lanthorn. He had to deal with deaf listeners, and he therefore proclaimed with a voice of command, 'Lanthorn!' But a lanthorn alone was a body without a soul, and he therefore demanded 'a *whole* candle.' To this the vital spark was to be given, and he continued to exclaim, 'light.' To render the mandate less individually oppressive, he went on to cry, 'Hang out your lights!' And that even the sleepers might sleep no more, he ended with 'Hear!'

'Lanthorn, and a whole candle light!
Hang out your lights! Hear!'

We are told by the chroniclers that, as early as 1416, the Mayor, Sir Henry Barton, ordered lanthorns and lights to be hanged out on the winter evenings betwixt Allhallows and Candlemas. For three centuries this practice subsisted, constantly evaded, no doubt, through the avarice and poverty of individuals, sometimes probably disused altogether, but still the custom of London up to the time of Queen Anne. The cry of the watchman, 'Hang out your lights,' was an exhortation to the negligent, which probably they answered only by snores; equally indifferent to their own safety and the public preservation. A worthy mayor in the time of Queen Mary provided the watchman with a bell, with which instrument he accompanied the music of his voice down to the days of the Commonwealth. The 'Statutes of the Streets,' in the time of Elizabeth, were careful enough for the preservation of silence in some things. They prescribed that 'no man shall blow any horn in the night, or whistle after the hour of nine of the clock in the night, under pain of imprisonment;' and what was a harder thing to keep, they also forbade a man to make any 'sudden outcry in the still of the night, as making any affray, or beating his wife.' Yet a privileged man was to go about knocking at doors and ringing his alarum—an intolerable nuisance if he did what he was ordered to do. But the watchmen were, no doubt, wise in their generation. With honest Dogberry they could not 'see how sleeping should offend;' and after

the watch was set, they probably agreed to 'go sit upon the church-bench till two, and then all to-bed.' Dekker, however, describes the bellman as a person of some activity — 'the child of darkness; a common night-walker; a man that had no man to wait upon him, but only a dog; one that was a disordered person, and at midnight would beat at men's doors, bidding them (in mere mockery) to look to their candles when they themselves were in their dead sleeps.' Stow says that in Queen Mary's day one of each ward 'began to go all night with a bell, and at every lane's end, and at the ward's end, gave warning of fire and candle, and to help the poor, and pray for the dead.' This is the more poetical bellman of Milton's 'Il Penseroso':—

'Some still removed place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth;
Or the bellman's drowsy charm,
To bless the doors from nightly harm.'

Herrick, also, has given us the verses of the bellman of poetry, in one of the charming morsels of his 'Hesperides':—

'From noise of scare-fires rest ye free,
From murders, Benedicite;
From all mischances that may fright
Your pleasing slumbers in the night,
Mercy secure ye all, and keep
The goblins from ye while ye sleep.
Past one o'clock, and almost two;
My masters all, "Good day to you!"'

But, with or without a bell, the real prosaic watchman continued to make the same demand as his predecessors for lights, through a long series of years; and his demand tells us plainly that London was a city without lamps. But though he was a prosaic person, he had his own verses. He addressed himself to the 'maids.' He exhorted them to make their lanthorns 'clear and bright.' He told them how long their candles were expected to burn. And finally,

like a considerate lawgiver, he gave a reason for his edict. In a print, which is of the time of James I., we have a watchman represented, with the following lines underwritten :—

‘ A light here, maids ! hang out your light,
And see your horns be clear and bright,
That so your candle clear may shine,
Continuing from six till nine ;
That honest men that walk along
May see to pass safe without wrong.’

The making of lanthorns was a great trade in the early times. We clung to King Alfred’s invention for the preservation of light with as reverend a love, during many centuries, as we bestowed upon his civil institutions. The horn of the favoured utensil was a very dense medium for illumination, but science had substituted nothing better ; and even when progressing people carried about a neat glass instrument with a brilliant reflector, the watchman held to his ponderous and murky relic of the past, making ‘night hideous’ with his voice, while he made ‘darkness visible’ with his lanthorn. But, as we see, in the early days of lanthorns, when the cresset was being superseded by ‘Hang out your lights,’ there was a wonderful demand for these commodities, and upon the maids and their mistresses, who were nightly appealed to for the provision of the external light that was to protect the ward from thieves and murderers, must have rested a very serious responsibility of keeping ‘horns clear and bright,’ and securing the candle against ‘chinks,’ either made by ‘time’ or bad manufacturers.

Paris was in the same condition as London for a long period. The nightly passengers through the streets walked about with lanthorns ; and it was only in times of alarm and imminent danger that ordinances were issued, commanding each occupier of a house to place a light in the window of his first floor. La Reinie, the first lieutenant-general of police, introduced public lanthorns in 1667. This was hailed as a great event, for a medal was struck upon the

occasion, bearing the legend *Urbis securitas et nitor*. One lantern, lighted with candles, in the middle of each street, and one at each end, constituted the amount of the security and splendour which Louis XIV. and his minister of police bestowed upon the Parisians. We cannot exactly say whether Boileau had composed his sixteenth Satire before this event, but about this period he describes the darkest wood as far less dangerous than the streets of Paris, in which the 'lated traveller' would encounter four bandits as he turned a corner :—

' Le bois le plus funeste et le moins fréquenté
Est au prix de Paris un lieu de sûreté,
Malheur donc à celui qu'une affaire imprévue
Engage un peu trop tard au détour d'une rue :
Bientôt quatre bandits, lui serrant les côtés,
La bourse ———'

London was perhaps better off, with its general system of private lights, however imperfect that system might be. In 1694, a licence was granted by the corporation to certain persons 'concerned and interested in glass-lights, commonly called or known by the name of convex-lights,' for the sole supply of the public lights in all public places in the city, for twenty-one years. Here, one would have thought; would have been the prosperous commencement of a system which would really have insured safety to the inhabitants of London. But when the lease was expired, we hear no more of the glass-lights or convex-lights; and every housekeeper whose house fronts any street or lane, and is of the rent of ten pounds, and every person having the charge of a public building, are each required and obliged, in every dark night, from the twenty-ninth of September until the twenty-fifth day of March, to hang out one or more lantern or lanterns, with sufficient cotton-wick candles lighted therein, and to continue the same burning in every such dark night, from the hour of six until the hour of eleven of the same night. The act of Common Council which makes these provisions, tells us they are 'for securing the houses against robbers and thieves,

for the prevention of murder, and the conveniency of passengers.' Glorious provisions, indeed, were they for accomplishing those ends! When there were clouds over the moon,—and whole streets and portions of streets were without light, because the inhabitants were not rated at ten pounds—and there was no light at all after eleven o'clock, we must admire the sagacity of the civic authorities, who thus proposed to put down robbery and murder. Defoe, who, in many things, was a century before his age, published a pamphlet in 1729, wherein he suggested a plan 'by which our streets will be so *strongly guarded*, and so *gloriously illuminated*, that any part of London will be as safe and pleasant at midnight as at noonday, and burglary totally impracticable.' London continued to be *strongly guarded* by its 'ancient and most quiet watchmen' for another hundred years; and the authorities began to think of rendering the streets *illuminated* 'with a convenient and sufficient number of glass-lamps,' not until they had gone up in terror to George II., to implore 'a speedy, rigorous, and exemplary execution of the laws upon the persons of offenders.' There was small difference in social arrangements between the old days of 'Hang out your lights,' and those semi-modern days when society, pretending to be in the most civilised condition, was really going backwards in many of the essential matters that constitute the 'salt of life.'

EVIL MAY-DAY.

THERE was fear and trouble in London on the eve of May-day, in the ninth year of King Henry the Eighth.

The sun was setting as John Rest, the Mayor, hurried into the Guildhall, where the Aldermen, and the Recorder, and the Sheriffs had been suddenly assembled. He spake to them with a tremulous voice, saying that he had just come from the great Cardinal, at York House, who had told him, of his own sure knowledge, that it was the intention of the young and riotous people to rise and distress the strangers ; and that the Cardinal had bid him go home, and wisely foresee that matter.

Then uprose a worshipful man, and said, that the grievances of the citizens were very great, and that the blood of the apprentices might be stirred to avenge their masters. 'For,' said he, 'did I not hear Dr. Bell preach, on Easter Tuesday, and set forth how the aliens and strangers eat the bread from the poor fatherless children, and take the living from all the artificers, and the intercourse from all the merchants?' And then another worshipful man arose, and declared how he had heard John Lincoln, the broker, hold forth to a great crowd at the Porch of St. Mary, Spital, that the English merchants could have no utterance ; for the merchant strangers bring in all silks, cloth of gold, wine, iron, and such other merchandise that no man, almost, buys of an Englishman ; and carry outward so much English tin, wool, and lead, that Englishmen that adventure outward can have no living. And then the worshipful assembly, with one or two exceptions, joined in the outcry against the merchant strangers, and especially against those who dealt in foreign nails, locks, baskets, cupboards, stools, tables, chests, and girdles ; which,

if they were wrought here, Englishmen might have some work and living.

Thus the guardians of the king's peace began to murmur, and clamour as bitterly as Dr. Bell or John Lincoln; and some were for doing nothing, and some were for calling out the watch, if the riot should take place, and the aliens should be slain.

But amidst these heats stood up the Under-Sheriff Master Thomas More; and there was instant silence.

'Good, my masters,' said he, 'our business is to prevent a riot, not redress a grievance: and, moreover, I think the grievance, such as it be, is not to be redressed either by noise or staff-striking. If the stranger exchanges his wine and oil for our wool and tin, he gives us what we want in return for what he wants; and God's gifts are not hidden in a corner. If the alien sells baskets, and girdles, and painted cloths, why is it that you can't sell the same work of your own hands? Because your workmanship is less skilful. We must amend ourselves before we blame the stranger for our poverty. My counsel is, that you all go to your own homes; lock up your apprentices till to-morrow's matin-bell; exhort them to peacefulness; and we will bring in the May with our old jollity, and the shaft of St. Andrew shall be set up to the old song of "Mighty Flora, goddess of fresh flowers."'

The council was broken up: and in all haste each alderman sent round his ward, that no man should stir out of his house after nine of the clock, and every one should keep his doors shut, and his servants within till seven of the morning. But the command was a fruitless one. There was in Chepe, as was the wont on May Even, a company of young men playing at bucklers—the good old English game which we now call single-stick. The moon was struggling with light clouds; but the young men went on with their play, for there was a bonfire in the street, and they were heedless or ignorant of the alderman's command. Paul's clock struck nine, and they were still at play. Then rushed into the midst of them the Worshipful Sir John Monday,

Alderman of Chepe; and he cried with a mighty voice, 'Stop!'

But the young men did not stop. And louder called the alderman; and faster and more furious was the play. And then the serjeants of the ward rushed in upon the young men to take them to the Counter. Then uprose the cry which the Blue-cloaks had so often raised to the terror of their masters, and 'Clubs! Clubs!' was echoed through Chepe and Cornhill; and in a short space the streets were filled. The buckler-play ceased; the alderman had fled. The materials of mischief were at hand. The spark burst into a flame when the cry went forth—'Down with the Lombards!'

It was long after midnight when the riot had ceased. At a house called Greengate, near Leadenhall, dwelt a calender of worsted, a native of Picardy, whose home was a great resort of foreigners; and the furious people rifled his house and destroyed his workshops. In Blanchechapelon, in Aldgate, dwelt stranger cordwainers; the people threw the boots and shoes into the streets, but they could not find the workmen, for they had fled for their lives. In Newgate there were imprisoned some artificers for molesting the strangers; the gaol was broken and the prisoners released. The demon of mischief was at last satisfied.

The first beam of the May morning was lighting the cross of the great spire of Paul's, and yet a crowd lingered in the gray dawn. They gathered, as they had gathered under happier auspices, before the church of St. Andrew Undershaft. There, in an open space, near where now stands the India House, lay a mighty shaft, from which the church derived its name. It was 'the Great Shaft of Cornhill,' famous under that name in the days of Chaucer—the wondrous May-pole, which, being set up with all revelry of song and morris-dance on May morning, stood higher than the church-steeple. The wearied and excited crowd rushed to their less dangerous work with renewed strength. The shaft was reared, and then went up a shout, which would have awakened the heaviest sleeper in Aldgate

—if any were asleep on that morning, when the rites of May were done with such evil observance. There was not only the shout of riot, but the boom of war. The Lieutenant of the Tower discharged his ordnance against the city, and the civic power had been raised, and men in harness came in great force against the rioters, who had dwindled down to some three hundred apprentices. The great shaft of St. Andrew soon looked down upon Cornhill in solitude and silence; the apprentices were hurried to the Tower.

There stood in the shade of the adjoining shambles two men observing this scene. As the watch stopped and questioned them, one of the two gave a countersign, and the watch passed on. The street was at length perfectly tranquil.

‘Sebastian,’ said the man of authority, ‘I came in a lucky hour to your rescue.’

The other replied in English, but with a foreign accent, ‘Master More, I am grateful. It is hard that I should be molested in my secret chamber, poring over my charts at midnight, and planning how I could carry your nation’s ships by the shortest cut to the New World. Yes, Master More, it is hard; you have saved my life, but my papers are destroyed.’

‘And yet these people,’ said the sheriff, ‘are to be pitied even in their fury. I could have stopped them, if that dull alderman had not come in with his watch and ward. I said to them, “Ye are breaking the laws; some of ye will be hanged, others banished. Silly apprentices, when ye are cast upon a strange land with nothing but your craft to give ye bread, how would ye like the foreigner to maltreat you, as ye would maltreat these aliens?” An Englishman, Master Sebastian Cabot, is fierce as his country’s mastiff; the kind voice may subdue him, when the rough hand is lifted in vain. But come; this gear is mended, and I must bestow you in my lodgings.’

As the two friends quietly walked from Cornhill to the Temple, they discoursed much, in spite of the late fear and fatigue.

‘Sebastian,’ said More, ‘methinks it is some twenty

years, as you have often told me, since you first saw the American continent from the prow of your father's ship. You saw that continent a year before Columbus.'

'In the same year of 1497,' replied Cabot, 'Vasco di Gama sailed from the Tagus on his first voyage to India.'

'Mighty events,' said More, 'that will change the face of the world. And here—with the wealth of these countries at the command of enterprise and labour—we are fighting in our streets because a few aliens bear away the poor payments for skill and industry. Master Cabot, I think I see God's hand in these revelations of distant empires, of which the wisest of antiquity never dreamed.'

'I am a blunt sailor, Master More,' said Cabot, 'tossed on the rough Adriatic, a boy before the mast—a Bristol mariner when my father adopted England for his country. I love that country, though its people be sometimes rude and jealous. You have let the Spaniard seize upon the empire of the Pacific. Be it yours to command the shores of the Atlantic. It shall go hard if I do not find you the North-West passage.'

'Sebastian,' said More, 'a man like you is worth a legion of conquerors. The world will be civilised by commerce, and not by arms.'

'The trinkets,' said Cabot, 'that we exchanged twenty years ago with the savages of Prima Vista,* have given them new desires which are the spurs to new industry.'

'Will the time ever arrive,' interrupted More, 'when those regions, now the hunting-grounds of a few starving tribes, shall be peopled by Europeans? You tell me of a country of forests and lakes. Will there be ships on those waters, and towns in those woods? Shall our seamen go fearlessly across the ocean which divides us, and give the handiworks of our looms for the native products of the New Land? That time is a long way off.'

'But it will come,' replied Cabot, 'if Governments do not retard it. Henry the Seventh bargained with my

* The name by which the Cabots designated the first spot they saw of the North American continent.

father that, out of the profits of every voyage, he, the king, should receive a fifth in merchandise or money. The practice is not likely to grow rusty.'

'Well, well, my friend,' said More, 'we will talk further of these things. But now the sun is up, so a merry May-morning to you. Come in.'

Four days after the Shaft of St. Andrew had been set up, there was a fearful tragedy enacted in London. There came into the city the Duke of Norfolk, with fourteen hundred men in harness; and they stood in the streets, and spake opprobrious words to the citizens; and, according to the chronicler, 'Proclamations were made that no women should come together to babble and talk, but that all men should keep their wives in their houses,'—so remorseless is military discipline. And the duke kept the 'oyer and determiner.' The buckler-play on May Even cost the lives of fifteen unhappy wretches, of whom the most were apprentices. What was done with the rest, the old chronicler, Hall, shall relate:—

'Thursday, the twenty-second day of May, the king came into Westminster Hall, for whom, at the upper end, was set a cloth of estate, and the place hanged with arras: with him was the Cardinal, the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, the Earls of Shrewsbury, of Essex, of Wiltshire, and of Surrey, with many lords and others of the king's council. The Mayor and Aldermen, and all the chief of the city, were there, in their best livery (according as the Cardinal had them appointed), by nine of the clock. Then the king commanded that all the prisoners should be brought forth. Then came in the poor younglings and old false knaves, bounden in ropes, all along, one after another, in their shirts, and every one a halter about his neck, to the number of four hundred men and eleven women. And when all were come before the king's presence, the Cardinal sore laid to the Mayor and Commonalty their negligence, and to the prisoners he declared that they had deserved death for their offence. Then all the prisoners together

cried, "Mercy, gracious lord—mercy!" Then the lords altogether besought his Grace of mercy; at whose request the king pardoned them all. And then the Cardinal gave unto them a good exhortation, to the great gladness of the hearers; and when the general pardon was pronounced, all the prisoners shouted at once, and altogether cast up their halters into the hall-roof, so that the king might perceive they were none of the discreetest sort.'

And so the first of May, in the year 1517, was ever after called EVIL MAY-DAY.

The apprentices' tragedy long threw a gloom over the May-games of London. No king and queen, with lords and ladies, rode a-maying to Greenwich; no company of tall yeomen, clothed all in green, bade welcome to the woods; no Robin Hood and his followers escorted the court to arbours made of boughs, decked with flowers, and furnished with the more substantial attractions of wine and venison; no citizens in every parish had their several mayings, and fetched in May-poles with pastime all the day long. Honest old Stow almost weeps over this falling off. The punishment of Evil May-day lasted through several generations. The great Shaft of St. Andrew was ignobly laid along under the pentices of Shaft Alley; and there it rotted on iron hooks for two-and-thirty years. Even that inglorious repose was at last denied to it. The Reformation came; and one Sir Stephen, curate of St. Katharine's, preaching from an elm-tree in St. Paul's churchyard, denounced the unhappy shaft as an idol; and away went his hearers that very Sunday, and 'after they had well dined, to make themselves strong,' as Stow gravely records, raised the shaft from the hooks, sawed it in pieces, and divided the logs amongst them.

COUNTRY WAYFARERS.

THOSE who are not tolerably familiar with the Memoir Literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, will have some difficulty to comprehend how our ancestors moved about from place to place, and carried on the business of communication with distant inland parts. The mode of conveyance was so universal, and so established, that it rarely offers itself to any especial notice. Till the beginning of the eighteenth century we were almost wholly an EQUESTRIAN people. Harrison describes 'the excellent paces' of our saddle-horses as peculiar to those of our soil; and says, that 'our countrymen, seeking their ease in every corner where it is to be had, delight very much in this quality.' All the records of early pageantry tell us of the magnificence of horsemen. Froissart saw the coronation of Henry IV., and he thus describes the progress of the triumphant Bolingbroke through the city. 'After dinner the duke departed from the Tower to Westminster, and rode all the way bareheaded; and about his neck the livery of France. He was accompanied with the prince his son, and six dukes, six earls, and eighteen barons, and in all, knights and squires, nine hundred horse. Then the king had on a short coat of cloth of gold, after the manner of Almayne, and he was mounted on a white courser, and the garter on his left leg. Thus the duke rode through London with a great number of lords, every lord's servant in their master's livery; all the burgesses and Lombard merchants in London, and every craft with their livery and device. Thus he was conveyed to Westminster. He was in number *six thousand horse.*' The old English chroniclers revel in these descriptions. They paint for us, in the most vivid colours, the entry into London of the conqueror of Agincourt; they are

most circumstantial in their relations of the welcome of his unhappy son, after the boy had been crowned at Paris, with the king riding amidst flowing conduits, and artificial trees and flowers, and virgins making 'heavenly melody,' and bishops 'in pontificalibus;' and having made his oblations at the cathedral, 'he took again his steed at the west door of Paul's and so rode forth to Westminster.' By the ancient 'order of crowning the kings and queens of England,' it is prescribed that, 'the day before the coronation, the king should come from the Tower of London to his palace at Westminster, through the midst of the city, mounted on a horse, handsomely habited, and bare-headed, in the sight of all the people.' The citizens were familiar with these splendid equestrian processions, from the earliest times to the era of coaches; and they hung their wooden houses with gay tapestry, and their wives and daughters sat in their most costly dresses in the balconies, and shouts rent the air, and they forgot for a short time that there was little security for life or property against the despot of the hour. They played at these pageants, as they still play, upon a smaller scale, themselves; and the Lord Mayor's horse and henchmen were seen on all solemn occasions of marching-watches and Bartholomew fairs. The city dignitaries seldom ride now; although each new sheriff has a horse-block presented to him at his inauguration, that he may climb into the saddle as beseems his gravity. The courtiers kept to their riding processions, down almost to the days of the great civil war; perhaps as a sort of faint shadow of the chivalry that was gone. Garrard tells us, in 1635, how the Duke of Northumberland rode to his installation as a knight of the garter at Windsor, with earls, and marquises, and almost all the young nobility, and many barons, and a competent number of the gentry, near a hundred horse in all. The era of coaches and chairs was then arrived; but the Duke of Northumberland did not hold that they belonged to knighthood. Fifty years earlier coaches were shunned as 'effeminate.' Aubrey, in his short memoir of Sir Philip Sidney, describes the feeling about

coaches in the days of Elizabeth : ' I have heard Dr. Pell say that he has been told by ancient gentlemen of those days of Sir Philip, so famous for men-at-arms, that 'twas then held as great a disgrace for a young gentleman to be seen riding in the streets in a coach, as it would now for such a one to be seen in the streets in a petticoat and waistcoat; so much is the fashion of the times now altered.' Roger North has left us a curious record of the equestrian ambition of a Lord Chancellor—Shaftesbury—in 1672 :

' His lordship had an early fancy, or rather freak, the first day of the term (when all the officers of the law, king's counsel, and judges, used to wait upon the g. at seal to Westminster Hall), to make this procession on horseback, as in old time the way was, when coaches were not so rife. And accordingly, the judges, etc., were spoken to, to get horses, as they and all the rest did, by borrowing and hiring, and so equipped themselves with black foot-cloths in the best manner they could; and divers of the nobility, as usual, in compliment and honour to a new lord-chancellor, attended also in their equipments. Upon notice in town of this cavalcade, all the show-company took their places at windows and balconies, with the foot-guards in the street, to partake of the fine sight; and being once well settled for the march, it moved, as the design was, stately along. But, when they came to straights and interruptions, for want of gravity in the beasts, and too much in the riders, there happened some curvetting, which made no small disorder. Judge Twisden, to his great affright, and the consternation of his grave brethren, was laid along in the dirt. But all at length arrived safe, without loss of life or limb in the service. This accident was enough to divert the like frolic for the future, and the very next term after, they fell to their coaches as before.' *

Nor was the use of saddle-horses confined to men in the early days. Chaucer thus describes his ' Wife of Bath : '—

* Examen, p. 57.

‘ Upon an ambler easily she sat,
Ywimpled well, and on her head a hat,
As broad as is a buckler or a targe,
A foot-mantle about her hippes large,
And on her feet a pair of spurres sharp.’

When Katharine of Spain came over in 1501 to marry Prince Arthur, a horse was provided for her conveyance from the Tower to St. Paul’s, upon which she was to ride ‘with the *pillion* behind a lord to be named by the king;’ but it was also ordered that ‘eleven *palfreys* in one suit be ordained for such ladies attending upon the said princess as shall follow next unto the said *pillion*.’ The great ladies long after this rode on horseback on ordinary occasions. Elizabeth commissioned Sir Thomas Gresham to purchase a horse at Antwerp; and the merchant-prince writes to Cecil in 1560:—‘The Queen’s Majesty’s Turkey horse doth begin to mend in his feet and body; which doubtless is one of the readiest horses that is in all Christendom, and the best.’ Of poor Mary of Scotland, the Earl of Shrewsbury, after conveying her to Buxton, writes to Cecil in 1580:—‘She had a hard beginning of her journey; for when she should have taken her horse, he started aside, and therewith she fell, and hurt her back, which she still complains of, notwithstanding she applies the bath once or twice a-day.’ The ‘horse-litter’ appears to have formed a connecting link between the saddle and the coach.

Luxury had its appliances ready for the almost exclusive mode of equestrian travel. ‘A lover of his country,’ who, in 1673, saw that coaches would be the ruin of the kingdom, says, ‘Before these coaches were set up, travellers rode on horseback; and men had boots, spurs, saddles, bridles, saddle-cloths, and good riding suits. . . . Most gentlemen, before they travelled in their coaches, used to ride with swords, belts, pistols, holsters, portmanteaus, and hat-cases: for when they rode on horseback they rode in one suit, and carried another to wear when they came to their journey’s end, or lay by the way. . . . And if they were women that travelled, they needed to have safeguards

and hoods, side-saddles, and pillions, with strappings, saddle or pillion-cloths, which, for the most part, were either laced or embroidered.' The saving of much of this expenditure, by travelling in coaches, the writer holds, is the ruin of trade. 'For, formerly, every man that had occasion to travel many journeys yearly, or to ride up and down, kept horses for himself and his servants, and seldom rid without one or two men.' In 1526, the Earl of Cumberland rode from Skipton to London, with thirty-three servants.* In 1582, the Earl of Shrewsbury writes to a dependant: 'I think my company will be twenty gentlemen and twenty yeomen, besides their men and my horse-keepers. I think to set forwards about the 11th of September, from Wingfield to Leicester, to my bed, and to make but four days' journey to London.†' In 1640, the wife of the last Earl of Cumberland rode from London to Londesborough, having thirty-two horses in her train; and the journey occupied eleven days. These slow progresses were the relics of the old times of sumpter-horses, when princes and nobles travelled with vast cavalcades, like an oriental caravan. We must not imagine that all equestrian travelling was at this slow rate. 'Ride for your life—haste, haste, post-haste!'—were the commands of ambitious peers and crafty ministers in the days of Elizabeth, to the unhappy courier who was to post from London to Edinburgh. Onward he went, through miry ways and over trackless commons,—sometimes dashing up to his saddle-bows through a ford swollen by mountain rains—sometimes bewildered in the mists of the trackless moorlands. As he approaches the borders new terrors await him. He rides in the dim morning twilight, with his ears alive to every sound. He fancies that the tread of horses and of cattle is at hand. He dares not hide himself, for he would be mistaken for a spy. He rides boldly on into the troop of marchers who are returning from their foray; and, to his surprise, is permitted to escape, after he has been

* Whitaker's Craven.

† Lodge's Illustrations.

saluted with a few words of opprobrium, and a snatch of the ballad of Johnnie Armstrong. At last he reaches 'Edina, Scotia's darling seat,' after a perilous journey of five days. His despatches are brought forth from their hiding-place;—the great men meet and deliberate;—and after a tarrying of a day or two, the express has to face again the same rough road.

James I. of England was nearly five weeks on his padded saddle, in his royal progress from Edinburgh to London; but Sir Robert Carey, determining to be the first to tell James that he was King of England, stole out of Richmond Palace, at three o'clock of the morning of Thursday, the 24th of March, and reached Edinburgh on the night of Saturday, the 26th, the king having gone to bed by the time he had knocked at the gate. This ride of four hundred miles, in seventy hours, gives one an elevated notion of the travelling accommodations of two centuries and a half ago. But it must be borne in mind that such instances were the exceptions to the rule of slow travelling. Although the Post was not established by law, there were postmasters, at the end of the sixteenth century, on all the great lines of roads; and, for a sufficient consideration, they would furnish such a traveller as Sir Robert Carey with abundant horses, that he might ride till they dropped,—as, indeed, he records one of his horses to have done. Then, again, although the roads were bad, the equestrian had many a mile of the smooth turf of an unenclosed country to gallop over. Let it not be forgotten, that if Sir Robert Carey rode from London to Edinburgh at the rate of six miles an hour, keeping on night and day, with relays of horses, the general communication of the country was so slow, that although Elizabeth died at two o'clock of the morning of Thursday, the 24th of March, and James was proclaimed king, at London, on the same morning, 'yet the news of it reached not the city of York until Sunday, March the 27th.'*

* Continuation of Stow's Annals.

The days before the Post were days when those who left their houses, for distant parts of England, were more separated from their friends than the North-American emigrant of our own times. The transmission of intelligence across the Atlantic is now an easier thing than the old conveyance of a letter two hundred miles, upon a cross-road. The historian of Craven, speaking of 1609, says, 'At this time the communication between the North of England and the universities was kept up by carriers, who pursued their tedious but uniform route with whole trains of pack-horses. To their care were consigned not only the packages, but frequently the persons, of young scholars. It was through their medium, also, that epistolary correspondence was managed; and as they always visited London, a letter could scarcely be exchanged between Yorkshire and Oxford in less time than a month.' Charles I. seems, in 1635, to have resolved to remedy this evil by the establishment of the home post-office. In his proclamation of that year, he says that there had been no certain intercourse between England and Scotland; and he therefore commands a running post to be established between London and Edinburgh, to go thither and come back again in six days; and for other roads there are promised the same advantages. In 1660 the General Post-office was established by Act of Parliament; and all letters were to be sent through this office, 'except such letters as shall be sent by coaches, common known carriers of goods by carts, waggons, and pack-horses, and shall be carried along with their carts, waggons, and pack-horses respectively.' The Postmaster-general and his deputies, under this statute, and no other person or persons, 'shall provide and prepare horses and furniture to let to hire unto all thorough posts and persons riding in post, by commission or without, to and from all and every the places of England, Scotland, and Ireland, where any post-roads are.' We find, by various clauses of this Act, that the postmaster was also to furnish a guide with a horn to such as ride post,—that he was to furnish horses within half an hour after demand,

—and that if he could not accomplish this, persons might hire a horse where they could, and sue the postmaster for a penalty. The country postmaster was an ancient functionary, who had long been in the habit of attending to the wants of those who bore letters inscribed, ‘Haste, haste, post haste.’ He was generally an innkeeper. Taylor, the Water-Poet, in his ‘Penniless Pilgrimage’ from London to Scotland, in 1618, has described one that might rival any Boniface on record; ‘From Stamford, the next day, we rode to Huntingdon, where we lodged at the postmaster’s house, at the sign of the Crown; his name is Riggs. He was informed who I was, and wherefore I undertook this my penniless progress; wherefore he came up to our chamber, and supped with us, and very bountifully called for three quarts of wine and sugar, and four jugs of beer. He did drink and begin healths like a horse-leech, and swallowed down his cups without feeling, as if he had had the dropsy, or nine pound of sponge in his maw. In a word, as he is a post, he drank post, striving and calling by all means to make the reckoning great, or to make us men of great reckoning. But in his payment he was tired like a jade, leaving the gentleman that was with me to discharge the terrible shot, or else one of my horses must have lain in pawn for his superfluous calling and unmannerly intrusion.’

The CARRIERS of England have always been a *progressive* body, in more than one sense of the word. They were amongst the first in our days to see what railways would accomplish for the transit of goods and passengers. They were the first, more than two centuries ago, to change the mode of passenger-conveyance from the riding-horse to the waggon. They brought the Oxford scholars, as we have seen, out of the North with their pack-horses. The most famous of all the old carriers was he of Cambridge, of whom Milton wrote,

‘Here lies old Hobson; death hath broke his girt,
And here, alas! hath laid him in the dirt.’

He it was that gave rise to the saying of ‘Hobson’s choice;’

for he obliged his customers for hackney-horses to take the one that stood next the stable-door. His trade of horse-letting was a refinement upon the old trade of the post-master : he intrusted a horse to the Cambridge scholar for a pleasure ride, and he sent no guide to feed the horse and bring it back. He was a pack-horse carrier. It was not till after his palmy days that the innovation of waggons came in, in which passengers were carried from city to city. But long did the passenger-waggon and the pack-horse continue to travel in good fellowship. Roderick Random tried both conveyances : 'There is no such convenience as a waggon in this country (Scotland), and my finances were too weak to support the expense of hiring a horse. I determined, therefore, to set out with the carriers, who transport goods from one place to another on horseback ; and this scheme I accordingly put in execution on the 1st day of November, 1739, sitting upon a pack-saddle between two baskets, one of which contained my goods in a knapsack. But by the time we arrived at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I was so fatigued with the tediousness of the carriage, and benumbed with the coldness of the weather, that I resolved to travel the rest of my journey on foot, rather than proceed in such a disagreeable manner.' We of this age complain that the penny-a-mile passengers in covered railway-carriages, which only go some fifteen miles an hour, are hardly used. Let us contrast this case with that of the pack-horse traveller. Seated in the throne which Roderick Random occupied, he sallied forth at 'four by the day,' when the horses were 'packed ;' forgetting, for a little while, the uneasiness of his seat, by the remembrance how he had been 'stung like a tench.' He is stuck in the midst of a file of fifty horses, a large companionship for safety. For a little while he is on the king's highway, and the bells go cheerily as he crosses some pleasant common. Perchance, as he ascends the wide moorlands, the clouds darken around him, the mist falls heavily, the carriers can see no track ; but by an unerring instinct the cautiously-stepping horses keep their file, and ask no better

guide than the sound of their sagacious leader's bells. He will not lead them into boggy places ; he will keep steady, even when man has ceased to direct him. If the way is unusually rough, the old and feeble horses lag behind ; but they never break the order of their march, and they ultimately push on, even if they should die in their perseverance. In Bewick's 'History of Quadrupeds' is an interesting anecdote of a pack-horse, thus exerting himself to maintain his place, dropping down dead when he reached the inn-yard. The inexperienced passenger must have needed some courage in these passages across the semi-deserts of uncultivated England. But soon he is in a lane some four feet wide,—sometimes floundering in the mud—at other times slipping upon a paved causeway, with a thick sludge on either side of the narrow track. In the hills of Derbyshire have we ridden the sure-footed pony of the country down these winding roads, shut out from the wide prospect around us by overhanging hedges—a privation which the pack-horse traveller little cared for. But not only in Derbyshire, in the days before men sought the picturesque, were such roads travelled over, but in the very thickest of our metropolitan suburb. Hagbush-lane, which was described by William Hone about thirty years ago, but which has now vanished, was the ancient bridle or pack-horse road from London to the North, and extended by the Holloway back road, as far as the City-road, near Old-street. 'Some parts of Hagbush-lane,' says Hone, 'are much lower than the meadows on either side.' At one time a terraced ridge, at another a deep rut, the pack-horse road must have been to the unaccustomed traveller a somewhat perilous pass. Happy would he be when the house which promised 'good entertainment for man and horse,' and which, in the early days of English art, hung out a representation of the animal he bestrode, which might be mistaken for a dromedary,—happy would he be when the 'watering-time' arrived. Well-earned would be the rest. Again would the cavalcade be in movement 'till dewy eve,'—again would come the rasher and

eggs for supper, with the black jack of home-brewed ale; again the sound sleep, in spite of night plagues; and again the early morning journey. A fortnight between York and London would be a quick passage. Well, there might be worse arrangements for a contemplative traveller; but for ourselves, being somewhat fearless of innovations, we must avow a preference for the Express-train.

Our antiquarian annalist, Stow, records that, in 1605, LONG WAGGONS for passengers and commodities travelled to London from Canterbury and other large towns. According to this authority, they were known as early as 1564. 'The lover of his country,' whom we have already quoted, has no violent objection to these 'long waggon-coaches,' as he calls them. They plead some antiquity; 'they were first set up.' Moreover, they are not guilty of the sin of expedition. Compared with the objects of his hatred, the stage-coaches, they are innocent things: 'They travel not such long journeys, go not out so early in the morning, neither come in so late at night; but stay by the way, travel easily, without jolting men's bodies, or hurrying them along, as the running coaches do.' These convenient creeping things had a safe existence for a century or two, and bore up bravely against the sneers of the 'flying-coaches,' that went four miles an hour. Roderick Random, as we have said, tried both the pack-horse and the waggon. This waggon was 'the long waggon' of Stow; the 'long waggon-coach' of 'the lover of his country.' Not much more than a hundred years ago, there was a vehicle moving on the Great North Road, in which passengers, who assumed to be gentlefolks, were travelling from York to London, at the fare of a shilling a-day,—not being more than a fortnight in the transit. The description which Smollett gives of his ride to London is known to have been derived from his own experience. He and his faithful friend, Strap, having observed the waggon a quarter of a mile before them, speedily overtook it; and ascending the convenience by a ladder, tumbled into the straw, under the darkness of the tilt, amidst four passengers, two gentlemen, and two

very genteel specimens of the fair sex. When they arrived at the inn where they were to lodge for the night, Captain Weazel and his lady desired a room for themselves, and a separate supper; but the impartial innkeeper replied, that 'he had prepared victuals for the passengers in the waggon, without respect of persons.' Roderick agrees to give ten shillings for his passage to London, provided Strap, who was to trudge by the side, should change places with him when he was disposed to walk. The mistakes, the quarrels, and the mirth of the passengers, are told by the novelist with a vivacity which would be admirable without its coarseness. They got tolerably reconciled to each other after the first five days' rumbling in the straw. 'Nothing remarkable happened during the remaining part of our journey, which continued six or seven days longer. At length we entered the great city, and lodged all night at the inn where the waggon put up.'

Let not the 'long stage-waggon,' which thus kept alive a monthly communication between Yorkshire and London, and carried, according to Smollett, no less dignified persons than a medical student, an ensign in a marching regiment, and a City money-lender, be confounded with the broad-wheeled waggon that, after being half drowned by the waters of the canal, has now been swept from the surface of the earth by the fire of the railroad. Have we not ourselves heard the merry bells of the team, breasting their way right in the centre of the broad Bath road, unyielding to coach or curricule? Have we not seen the bright eye glancing from the opening of the tilt behind, as the ponderous wain is moving beside the village-green, and the stalwart driver tells the anxious maiden that it is only one more mile to the turnpike where she is to meet 'the young man?' Have we not sat beneath the branching elm which fronts some little inn where waggons congregate, and heard much goodly talk about the dearness of horses, and the craft of Lunnun? They are gone,—these once-familiar scenes :

'They live no longer in the faith of reason;'

but they will live for ever in such pictures as that our friend Creswick has painted of 'The London Road a hundred years ago.'

We have abundant evidence that STAGE-COACHES were in use soon after the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1663, Mr. Edward Parker, writing to his father, who lived near Preston, says: 'I got to London on Saturday last. My journey was noways pleasant, being forced to ride in the boot all the way. The company that came up with me were persons of great quality, as knights and ladies. My journey's expense was thirty shillings. This travel hath so indisposed me, that I am resolved never to ride up again in the coach.* Let us turn aside for a moment, to explain what 'the boot' was. There were two boots to these old coaches—uncovered projections from each side of the carriage. Taylor, the Water-Poet, thus describes them: 'It [the coach] wears two boots, and no spurs, sometimes having two pair of legs in one boot; and oftentimes, against nature, most preposterously, it makes fair ladies wear the boot. Moreover, it makes people imitate sea-crabs, in being drawn sideways, as they are when they sit in the boot of the coach.' In this boot, then, travelled unhappy Edward Parker. He does not tell us the rate at which he travelled. We will supply that information from other sources.

From the Diary of Sir William Dugdale, it appears that in 1659 he set forward to London in the Coventry coach, on the 2nd of May, and arrived on the 4th of May—three days. The Diary of a Yorkshire clergyman† shows that in the winter of 1682, a journey from Nottingham to London in a stage-coach occupied four whole days. In Antony à Wood's Diary, we are told, that in 1667 he travelled from Oxford to London in the coach, and was two days in accomplishing the passage. A few years after, the feat was performed in thirteen hours; but in 1692 it was again found necessary to give two days to the journey, from Michaelmas to Lady-day. 'The lover of his country,' how-

* *Archæologia*, vol. xx.

† Quoted in *Archæologia*, vol. xx.

ever, has furnished us the most complete picture of coach travelling, in 1673. The long journeys were from London to Exeter, Chester, or York. On these roads the fare was forty shillings in summer, and forty-five shillings in winter, each way. The coachman was changed four times, and the passenger was expected to give each coachman a shilling at the end of the stage, besides a total of three shillings for drink to the coachmen at their halting-places. In summer, the time occupied in riding was four days—in winter, six days. But these were long days. The complaining writer says: ‘What advantage is it to men’s health to be called out of their beds into these coaches an hour before day in the morning, to be *hurried* in them from place to place, till one hour, two, or three, within night; inso-much that, after sitting all day—in the summer time stifled with heat and choked with dust, or in the winter time starving and freezing with cold or choked with filthy fogs—they are often brought into their inns by torch-light, when it is too late to sit up to get a supper; and next morning they are forced into the coach so early that they can get no breakfast?’ Added to these troubles, the fault-finder alleges the grievances of crying children, and crowds of boxes and bundles. He gives us some notion of the roads and the safety of the carriages: ‘Is it for a man’s health to travel with tired jades, to be laid fast in the foul ways, and forced to wade up to the knees in mire; afterwards sit in the cold till teams of horses can be sent to pull the coach out? Is it for their health to travel in rotten coaches, and to have their tackle, or perch, or axletree broken, and then to wait three or four hours, sometimes half a day, to have them mended, and then to travel all night to make good their stage?’ This is a queer state of things, a little exaggerated, perhaps, but in the main true. It is remarkable how long the roads and the coaches continued to be execrable.

The express train of the Great Western Railway goes to Exeter, a hundred and ninety-three miles, in four hours and a half. In 1725, the stage-coach journey from London

to Exeter occupied four summer days. The passengers were aroused every morning at two o'clock, left their inn at three, dined at ten o'clock, and finished their day's labour at three in the afternoon.* In 1739, Mr. Andrew Thompson, of Glasgow, with a friend, left Glasgow to ride to London. There was no turnpike-road till they came to Grantham, within a hundred and ten miles of the metropolis. Up to that point they travelled on a narrow causeway, with an unmade soft road on each side. As strings of pack-horses met them from time to time, they were obliged to plunge into the side road, and had often difficulty in scrambling again upon the causeway.† As late as 1763, there was only a coach once a month from Edinburgh to London, which was twelve or fourteen days on the road. In the south of England we made more rapid strides to perfection. We have before us a very curious bill of the 'Alton and Farnham Machine,' dated 1750, which is headed with an engraving, furnishing the best representation of the coach of a century ago that we have seen. The clumsy vehicle carries no passengers on the roof; but it has a large basket—literally a basket—swung behind, for half-price passengers. The coachman has four horses in hand, and a postillion rides a pair of leaders. This is truly a magnificent equipage, and it accomplished its journey in a marvellously short time, starting at six in the morning, and arriving duly the same night. This journey of forty-seven miles in one day was a feat; and well might the vehicle which accomplished it be dignified by the name of 'Machine.' The name became common; and hence stage-coach horses were called 'Machiners.'

Of the travelling by private carriages in those days of the most villainous cross-roads we have abundant evidence. The Duke of Somerset, who died in 1748, was always compelled by the badness of the roads to sleep at Guildford, on his way from Petworth to London. A letter of one of the duke's servants to another servant, announces his master's

* Mrs. Manley's Journey.

† Cleland's Glasgow.

intention to arrive at Petworth, from London; and adds directions, that 'the keepers and others who knew the holes and sloughs, must come to meet his Grace, with lanthorns and long poles, to help him on his way.' The grandfather of the present Duke of Buckingham had an inn built for his special accommodation at Winslow, as the journey from Stowe to London could not be accomplished in one day. Vanbrugh, in the '*Provoked Husband*,' has given us an amusing, and, we have little doubt, faithful account of the progress of a Yorkshire family to town in their own equipage. According to the honest record of John Moody, their serving man, there was 'Nothing but mischief! Some devil's trick or other plagued us, aw th' day long! Crack goes one thing; Bawnce! goes another. Woa, says Roger—Then souse! we are all set fast in a slough. Whaw! cries Miss!—scream go the maids! and bawl! just as thof' they were stuck! And so, mercy on us! this was the trade from morning to night.'

From the days of the first turnpike a whole century appears to have passed before any very great improvements were effected in the roads, or in the vehicles travelling upon them. Mr. M'Culloch says, 'It was not till after the peace of Paris, in 1763, that turnpike-roads began to be extended to all parts of the kingdom; and that the means of internal communication began, in consequence, to be signally improved.*' Mr. Porter, in an article contributed to '*The Companion to the Almanac*,' 1837, speaks of the condition of a road only thirty-six miles from London, about the same period:—'A gentleman now living at Horsham, in Sussex, has stated, on the authority of a person whose father carried on the business of a butcher in that town, that in his time the only means of reaching London was either by going on foot or on horseback, the latter method not being practicable at all periods of the year, nor in every state of the weather; and that the roads were never at that time in such a condition as to admit of sheep

* Account of the British Empire.

or cattle being driven upon them to the London markets; for which reason the farmers were prevented sending thither the produce of their lands, the immediate neighbourhood being, in fact, their only market. Under these circumstances the quarter of a fat ox was commonly sold for about fifteen shillings, and the price of mutton was one penny farthing per pound.' Mr. Porter, in his 'Progress of the Nation,' also informs us, that 'when it was in contemplation to extend turnpike-roads from the metropolis to more distant points than those to which they had before been carried, the farmers in the metropolitan counties petitioned Parliament against the plan, fearing lest their market being invaded by so many competitors, who would sell their produce more cheaply, they should be ruined.' Two centuries before these wise farmers, William Harrison—in many things a shrewd observer—thought it would be good 'if it were enacted that each one should keep his next market with his grain, and not to run six, eight, ten, fourteen, or twenty miles from home to sell his corn, where he doth find the highest price.' Harrison saw clearly enough that communication equalised prices; although he would have kept down prices, and therefore kept down all profitable employment, by narrowing the market of the producers. Dr. Johnson appears to have had somewhat similar notions of public advantage. In 1784 he visited Mr. Windham, who made a note of his conversations, amongst which we find the following: 'Opinion about the effect of turnpike-roads. Every place communicating with each other. Before, there were cheap places and dear places. Now, all refuges are destroyed for elegant or genteel poverty. Disunion of families, by furnishing a market to each man's ability, and destroying the dependence of one man upon another.' To have 'cheap places and dear places'—to maintain 'the dependence of one man upon another'—has been the struggle of class interests up to this hour. Roads and railroads and steamboats have annihilated the one remnant of feudality, local cheapness purchased by general dearness; and the penny-a-mile

trains would extinguish all that is unhealthy in 'the dependence of one man upon another,' if the other remnant of feudality, the law of parish settlement, were broken up.

The extension of turnpike-roads through the country at last brought about the ultimate perfection of coach-traveling,—THE MAIL. More than sixty years ago was this great engine of our civilization first set in motion. Before Mr. Palmer suggested his improvements to the Government, letters sent by the post, which left Bath on Monday night, were not delivered in London till Wednesday afternoon. The London post of Monday night did not reach Worcester, Birmingham, or Norwich, till Wednesday morning, and Exeter on the Thursday morning. A letter from London to Glasgow, before 1788, was five days on the road. The letter-bags were carried by boys on horseback; and the robbery of the mail was, of course, so common an occurrence, that no safety whatever could be secured in the transmission of money. The highwayman was the great hero of the travelling of that day. But on the 2nd of August, 1784, the first mail-coach left London for Bristol; and from that evening, till the general establishment of the railway system, the mail was one of the wonders and glories of our country.

The stage-coaches followed the mails in the course of improvement. We remember them when they were not very particular about the pace; and four hours from Windsor to London was pretty well. To be sure, there was a quarter of an hour for breakfast at Longford, and another quarter of an hour for luncheon at Turnham-green; but it was a pleasant ride in days when men were not in a hurry. The pace of our now surviving stage-coaches is, for the first half-hour after the railway, a sort of impertinence. You feel you are crawling when you have mounted the ten-mile-an-hour tortoise that is to take you across the country from the station; but yet the driver presumes to talk of his cattle. Look at him. He has a load of responsibility put upon him which he is little able to bear. He *must* keep time. He dares not have a snack at the half-way-

house; he has no messages to deliver; he sticks gloomily upon the box, while the horses are hurriedly changed; he sleeps not at nights without dreaming of the whistle; he is dependent upon an absolute will; he has a cadaverous melancholy face, as if Time were beating him prematurely. Contrast him with Washington Irving's English coachman of 1820:—'He has commonly a broad full face, curiously mottled with red, as if the blood had been forced by hard feeding into every vessel of the skin; he is swelled into jolly dimensions by frequent potations of malt liquors, and his bulk is still further increased by a multiplicity of coats, in which he is buried like a cauliflower, the upper one reaching to his heels. He wears a broad-brimmed low-crowned hat; a huge roll of coloured handkerchief about his neck, knowingly knotted and tucked in at the bosom; and has in summer-time a large bouquet of flowers in his button-hole,—the present, most probably, of some enamoured country lass. His waistcoat is commonly of some bright colour, striped; and his small-clothes extend far below the knees, to meet a pair of jockey-boots which reach about half-way up his legs.' The portrait belongs to the archæology of England. A sedan, a hackney-coach, and a stuffed stage-coachman of the fat times, should be deposited in the rooms of the Antiquarian Society, while a specimen can be preserved in relic, or made out from description.

PHILIP SIDNEY AND FULKE GREVILLE.

THERE has been high revelry in Shrewsbury in 1569. Sir Henry Sidney, Lord President of the Council of the Marches, has made his annual visit, during an interval in his government of Ireland, in which he had returned to his favourite Ludlow Castle. Philip Sidney, his son, is a boy of fifteen, at the Free Grammar School of Shrewsbury. In the same form—of the same age—is his devoted friend, Fulke Greville. The ceremonies are over. Sir Henry has sat in the ancient hall of the Council House, to hear complaints and to dispense justice. He has gone in solemn procession to St. Chad's Church, with bailiffs, and aldermen, and wardens of companies. He has banqueted with the masters of the school in the great library. He has been present at a stage-play in the Guildhall—the Mayor's play. But more welcome than all the pomp of office is a quiet hour with his boy Philip, as they sit in the cool of a May morning on the terrace of the Council House, and look over the bright Severn towards Haughmond Hill, and muse in silence, as they gaze upon one of those unrivalled combinations of natural beauty and careful cultivation, which have been the glory of England during many ages of comparative freedom and security. It is the last of Philip's school years. He is to proceed to Oxford. His friend Greville afterwards wrote of him:—'I lived with him and knew him from a child, yet I never knew him other than a man, with such staidness of mind, lovely and familiar gravity, as carried grace and reverence above greater years.' Proud is the father of his noble son. He is 'the light of his family.' They talk as friend to friend. The father—a statesman and soldier—is not displeased to see that, beneath the gravity

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of the precocious boy, are fiery glances of feeling almost approaching to rashness. They become one who in after years exclaimed, 'I am a Dudley in blood—the duke's daughter's son.'

The Lord President has departed. There is holiday at the school; and Sidney and Greville walk forth to the fields in that spring-time. Shrewsbury is a place in which the young Sidney lives in the memories of the past. Few of the public buildings and private houses of the town are of the more recent Tudor architecture. The Market Square and Pride Hill are rich in the black oaken timbers, and gabled roofs, and panelled carvings of the fifteenth century. The deserted abbey is not yet in ruins. The castle has a character of crumbling strength. The High Cross is perfect. There, were beheaded the last of the British Princes of Wales; and there, suffered some who had the misfortune not to fall with Hotspur in the battle of Hateley Field. At the Augustine Friars, and the Grey Friars, are still seen the graves of many who had perished in that fight. The Welsh Bridge, with its 'great gate to enter into by the town, and at the other end, towards Wales, a mighty strong tower, to prohibit enemies to enter into the bridge' (as described by old Leland), has its associations of border hostilities. Sidney's mind is formed to luxuriate in the poetry of history.

The young men take their course into the country by the Castle Foregate. They are in earnest talk.

'What a monster these players make of Richard the Third,' says Sidney. 'Maugre my loyal reverence for her Highness's grandfather, I have a liking for the venomous little Yorkist. Even the players couldn't show him as a coward.'

'Not when they make him whimper about revenge, suns, moons, and planets; silly lambs and croaking ravens—all crying for revenge upon him? Heavens! what stuff!'

'Rare stuff! How is it that these play-writers cannot

make their people talk like Englishmen and Christians? When the board is up—"Bosworth Field"—and two armies fly in, represented by four swords and bucklers—and the usurper dashes about, despite his wounds,—hear how he wastes his precious time. Do you remember?"

'Yes, yes—

"Fly, my lord, and save your life."

'I have it—

"Fly, villain! look I as though I would fly?

No, first shall this dull and senseless ball of earth
Receive my body cold and void of sense.

Yon watery heavens scowl on my gloomy day,
And darksome clouds close up my cheerful sound.—

Down is thy sun, Richard, never to shine again.—

The bird whose feathers should adorn my head
Hovers aloft and never comes in sight."

There's a Richard for you.'

'Bravo, Philip! You should join a fellowship of players. You would beat the varlet with the hump that mouthed it on Tuesday. But why so hard upon the rhetoric of the vagabonds? Your favourite Gorboduc is full of such trash!'

'Yes, and faulty even as this True tragedy of Richard the Third, in time and place. In two hours of the Mayor's play, we had Shore's wife in Cheapside, and poor dead Richard about to be drawn through Leicester on a collier's horse.'

'Suppose there were painted scenes, as some of the playhouses have, instead of the door painted in great letters—couldn't the imagination go from Cheapside to Leicester in spite of Aristotle? and can't it, even with the help of the painted board? But here we are at Battlefield.'

'I never walk over these meadows,' exclaimed Sidney, 'without deep emotion. I was reading Hall just before my father came. How graphic these chroniclers are, compared with the ranting players.'

‘What you read, I read, Philip.’

‘As we walked through the Eastgate, I could not but think of that day when Henry came with his host into Shrewsbury, and being advertised that the earls were at hand with banners displayed and battles ranged, marched suddenly out by the Eastgate, and there encamped.’

‘An evening of parley and defiance, followed by a bloody morning.’

‘The next day, in the morning early, which was the vigil of Mary Magdalene, the king set his battle in good order—and so his enemies. There, on that gentle rise, Greville, must the rebel hosts have been arrayed. Then suddenly the trumpets blew. The cry of St. George went up on the King’s part—and that cry was answered by Esperancé Percy. By Heaven, the tale moves me like the old song of Percy and Douglas!’

‘Here is a theme for the players. Write the tragedy of Hotspur, Philip.’

‘Nonsense. What could I do with it, even if I were a maker? The story begins with the deposition of Richard. It is an epic, and not a tragedy. And yet, Fulke, when I see the effect these acted histories produce upon the people, I am tempted, in spite of Aristotle, to wish that some real poet would take in hand our country’s annals. The teaching of our day is taking that form. The Players are the successors of the Bards.’

‘What a character is that young Harry of Monmouth—the profligate and the hero! Something might be made of these contending elements.’

‘Yes, the players would do it bravely. How they would make him swagger and bully—strike the chief justice and slaughter the Welshmen. Harry of Monmouth was a gentleman, and the players could not touch him.’

‘If the stage is to teach the people, surely right teachers will arise. Look at our preachers. They stir the dull clowns and the sleepy burgesses with passionate eloquence, and yet they preach as scholars. They never lower them-

selves to their audiences. And why should the stage be the low thing which we see, when it addresses the same classes ?

‘ There may be a change some day ; but not through any theorick about it. England may have her *Æschylus*—when the man comes ; perchance in our age—more likely when all the dust and cobwebs of our semi-barbarism are swept away—for we are barbarians yet, Greville.’

‘ Come, come—your fine Italian reading has spoiled you for our brave old English. We have poetry in us if we would trust to nature. There is the ancient blind crowder that sits at our school-gate, with his ballads of love and war, which you like as much as I do. Has he no poetry to tell of ? As good, I think, as the sonnets of Master Francis Petrarch.’

‘ Don’t be a heretic, Greville. But see ; the sun is sinking behind that bosky hill, from which Hotspur, looking to the east, saw it rise for the last time. We must be homeward.’

‘ And here, where the chapel-bell is tolling a few priests to evensong, forty thousand men were fighting, a century and a half ago—for what ?’

‘ And for the same doubtful cause went on fighting for three-quarters of a century. What a sturdy heart must our England have to bear these things and yet live !’

‘ Times are changed, Philip ! Shall we have any civil strife in our day ?’

‘ Papist and Puritan would like to be at it. But the rule of the law is too strong for them. Yet my father says that the fighting days will come over again—not for questions of sovereign lineage, but of vulgar opinion. The reforms of religion have produced sturdy thinkers. There is a beast with many heads called the Commonalty, growing stronger every day ; and it is difficult to chain him or pare his claws.’

‘ Well, well, Philip, we are young politicians, and need not trouble our heads yet about such matters. You are

going to Oxford. What will the good mother make of you—a statesman, a soldier, or a scholar?’

‘Must the characters be separable? Whatever I am, dear Fulke, I will not shame my ancestry.’

‘And I, dear Philip, will never abate my love for you; and that will keep me honest.’



Sidney's Tree.



SHAKSPERE'S FIRST RIDE TO LONDON.

Two young men, Richard Burbage and William Shakspeare, 'both of one county, and, indeed, almost of one town,' may be assumed, without any improbability, to have taken their way together towards London, on the occasion when one of them went forth for the first time from his native home, depressed at parting, but looking hopefully towards the issue of his adventure. There would be little said till long after the friends had crossed the great bridge at Stratford. The eyes of one would be frequently turned back to look upon the old spire. Thoughts which unquestionably have grown out of some such separation as this would involuntarily possess his soul :—

'How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek—my weary travel's end—
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
"Thus far the miles are measur'd from thy friend!"

The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods dully on to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider lov'd not speed, being made from thee.*

The first stages of this journey would offer little interest to the travellers. Having passed Long Compton, and climbed the steep range of hills that divide Warwickshire from Oxfordshire, weary stretches of barren downs would present a novel contrast to the fertility of Shakspeare's own county. But after a few miles the scene would change: a noble park would stretch out as far as the eye could reach—rich with venerable oaks and beeches, planted in the reign of Henry I.—the famous park of Woodstock. The poet would be familiar with all the interesting associations of this place. Here was Rosamond Clifford secluded from the eyes of the world by her bold and accomplished royal lover. Here dwelt Edward III. Here, more 'interesting than either fact, Chaucer wrote some of his early poems—

'Within a lodge out of the way,
Beside a well in a forest.'†

And here, when he retired from active life, he composed his immortal 'Canterbury Tales.' Here was the Lady Elizabeth a prisoner, almost dreading death, only a year or two before she ascended the throne. Here, 'hearing upon a time out of her garden a certain milkmaid singing pleasantly, she wished herself to be a milkmaid as she was; saying that her case was better, and life more merrier, than was hers in that state as she was.'‡ The travellers assuredly visited the palace which a few years after Hentzner described as abounding in magnificence; and near a spring of the brightest water they would have viewed all that was left of the tomb of Rosamond, with her rhyming epitaph, the production, probably, of a later age:—

'Hic jacet in tombâ Rosamundi non Rosamundâ,
Non redolet sed olet, quæ redolere solet.'

* Sonnet 50.

† Chaucer's 'Dream.'

‡ Holinshed.

The earliest light of the next morning would see the companions on their way to Oxford; and an hour's riding would lodge them in the famous hostelry of the Corn-Market, the Crown. Aubrey tells us that 'Mr. William Shakespeare was wont to go into Warwickshire once a year, and did commonly in his journey lie at this house in Oxon, where he was exceedingly respected.*' The poet's first journey may have determined his subsequent habit of resting at this house. It is no longer an inn. But one who possessed a true enthusiasm, Thomas Warton, described it in the last century, in the belief 'that Shakspeare's old hostelry at Oxford deserves no less respect than Chaucer's Tabard at Southwark.' He says, 'As to the Crown Inn, it still remains an inn, and is an old decayed house, but probably was once a principal inn in Oxford. It is directly in the road from Stratford to London. In a large upper room, which seems to have been a sort of hall for entertaining a large company, or for accommodating (as was the custom) different parties at once, there was a bow window, with three pieces of excellent painted glass.' We have ample materials for ascertaining what aspect Oxford presented for the first time to the eye of Shakspeare. The ancient castle, according to Hentzner, was in ruins; but the elegance of its private buildings, and the magnificence of its public ones, filled this traveller with admiration. So noble a place, raised up entirely for the encouragement of learning, would excite in the young poet feelings that were strange and new. He had wept over the ruins of religious houses; but here was something left to give the assurance that there was a real barrier against the desolations of force and ignorance. A deep regret might pass through his mind that he had not availed himself of the opening which was presented to the humblest in the land, here to make himself a ripe and good scholar. Oxford was the patrimony of the people; and he, one of the people, had not claimed his birthright. He was set out upon a doubtful adventure;

* Life of D'Avenant.

the persons with whom he was to be associated had no rank in society,—they were to a certain extent despised; they were the servants of a luxurious court, and, what was sometimes worse, of a tasteless public. But, on the other hand, as he paused before Balliol College, he must have recollected what a fearful tragedy was there acted some thirty years before. Was he sure that the day of persecution for opinions was altogether past? Men were still disputing everywhere around him; and the slighter the differences between them, the more violent their zeal. They were furious for or against certain ceremonial observances; so that they appeared to forget that the object of all devotional forms was to make the soul approach nearer to the Fountain of wisdom and goodness, and that He could not be approached without love and charity. The spirit of love dwelt in the inmost heart of this young man. It was in after times to diffuse itself over writings which entered the minds of the loftiest and the humblest, as an auxiliary to that higher teaching which is too often forgotten in the turmoil of the world. His intellect would at any rate be free in the course which was before him. Much of the knowledge that he had acquired up to this period was self-taught; but it was not the less full and accurate. He had ranged at his will over a multitude of books,—idle reading, no doubt, to the systematic and professional student; but, if weeds, weeds out of which he could extract honey. The subtle disputations of the schools, as they were then conducted, were more calculated, as he had heard, to call forth a talent for sophistry than a love of truth. Falsehood might rest upon logic, for the perfect soundness of the conclusion might hide the rottenness of the premises. He entered the beautiful Divinity Schools, and there too he found that the understanding was more trained to dispute than the whole intellectual being of man to reverence. He would pursue his own course with a cheerful spirit, nothing doubting that, whilst he worked out his own happiness, he might still become an instrument of good to his fellow men. And yet did the young man reverence Oxford, because he

reverenced letters as opposed to illiteracy. He gave his testimony to the worth of Oxford at a distant day, when he held that the great glory of Wolsey was to have founded Christchurch :—

‘ He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one :
Exceeding wise, fair spoken, and persuading—
Lofty and sour to them that loved him not ;
But, to those men that sought him, sweet as summer.
And though he were unsatisfied in getting,
(Which was a sin), yet, in bestowing, madam,
He was most princely. Ever witness for him
Those twins of learning that he rais’d in you,
Ipswich and Oxford ; one of which fell with him,
Unwilling to outlive the good he did it ;
The other, though unfinish’d, yet so famous,
So excellent in art, and still so rising,
That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue.’*

The journey from Oxford to London must have occupied two days, in that age of bad roads and long miles. Harrison, in his ‘ Chapter on Thoroughfares ’ (1586), gives us the distances from town to town : Oxford to Whatleie, 4 miles ; Whatleie to Thetisford, 6 ; Thetisford to Stockingchurch, 5 ; Stockingchurch to East Wickham, 5 ; East Wickham to Baccansfield, 5 ; Baccansfield to Uxbridge, 7 Uxbridge to London, 15. Total, 47 miles. Our modern admeasurements give 54. Over this road, then, in many parts a picturesque one, would the two friends from Stratford take their course. They would fare well and cheaply on the road. Harrison tells us, ‘ Each comer is sure to lie in clean sheets, wherein no man hath been lodged since they came from the laundress, or out of the water wherein they were last washed. If the traveller have a horse his bed doth cost him nothing, but if he go on foot he is sure to pay a penny for the same. But whether he be horseman or footman, if his chamber be once appointed he may carry the key with him, as of his own house, so long as he lodgeth there. If he lose aught whilst he

* Henry VIII. Act i., Scene 1.

abideth in the inn, 'the host is bound by a general custom to restore the damage, so that there is no greater security anywhere for travellers than in the greatest inns of England.'

On the evening of the fourth day after their departure from home would the young wayfarers, accustomed to fatigue, reach London. They would see only fields and hedge-rows, leading to the hills of Hampstead and Highgate on the north of the road, and to Westminster on the south. They would be wholly in the country, with a long line of road before them, without a house, at the spot which now, although bearing the name of a lane—Park Lane—is one of the chosen seats of fashion. Here Burbage would point out to his companion the distant roofs of the Abbey and the Hall of Westminster; and nearer would stand St. James's Palace,—a solitary and somewhat gloomy building. They would ride on through fields till they came very near the village of St. Giles's. Here, turning from their easterly direction to the south, they would pass through meadows, with the herd quietly grazing under the evening sun in one enclosure, and the laundress collecting her bleached linen in another. They are now in St. Martin's Lane; and the hum of population begins to be heard. The inn in the Strand receives their horses, and they take boat at Somerset Place. Then bursts upon the young stranger a full conception of the wealth and greatness of that city of which he has heard so much, and imagined so much more. Hundreds of boats are upon the river. Here and there a stately barge is rowed along, gay with streamers and rich liveries; and the sound of music is heard from its decks, and the sound is repeated from many a beauteous garden that skirts the water's edge. He looks back upon the cluster of noble buildings that form the Palace of Westminster. York Place and the spacious Savoy bring their historical recollections to his mind. He looks eastward, and there is the famous Temple, and the Palace of Bridewell, and Baynard's Castle. Above all these rises up the majestic spire of Paul's. London Bridge, that

wonder of the world, now shows its picturesque turrets and multitudinous arches; and in the distance is seen the Tower of London, full of grand and solemn associations. The boat rests at the Blackfriars. In a few minutes they are threading the narrow streets of the precinct; and a comfortable house affords the weary youths a cheerful welcome.

MAY-MORNING : ITS POETRY AND ITS PROSE.

ONCE upon a Time—it is a quarter of a century ago—I used to have raptures about May-day. I translated Buchanan's Ode to May; I read Herrick under the hawthorn-trees in Windsor Park. On one year, tempted by as bright a sky and as balmy an air as ever inspired the votaries of spring in this variable climate, I silently gave myself up to the fascinations of the beauteous budding-time and its old recollections. I believed in all our ancestors' raptures about May-day, convinced that it was with no effort against blights and chills that they went out, as old Stow tells us, on that memorable morning, 'into the sweet meadows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds praising God in their kind.' I then understood, while the blue vault was scarcely speckled with a cloud, and the foliage of the trees put forth its freshest green, and the hawthorn was budding to prove that the old seasons had not forsaken us, and the thrush was singing over his sitting mate—I then understood the enthusiasm of one of our old rural poets:—

'Get up, get up, for shame! the blooming Morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn;
See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colours through the air.
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed! and see
The dew bespangling herb and tree;
Each flower has wept, and bow'd towards the east
Above an hour since, yet you not drest;
Nay, not so much as out of bed,
When all the birds have matins said.

And sung their thankful hymns;—'tis sin,
 Nay, profanation, to keep in;
 When as a thousand virgins on this day
 Spring sooner than the lark to fetch in May.'

It was in that happy season that I rubbed up, for the first time, some of the antiquarianism of May-day. The formal Mr. Bourne, who coquetted with old customs by diligently recording them with a pious abuse of their heathenish vanities, says—'On the calends, or the first day of May, commonly called May-day, the juvenile part of both sexes were wont to rise a little after midnight, and walk to some neighbouring wood, accompanied with music and the blowing of horns; where they break down branches from the trees, and adorn them with nosegays and crowns of flowers. When this is done they return with their booty homewards, about the rising of the sun, and make their doors and windows to triumph in the flowery spoil. The after-part of the day is chiefly spent in dancing round a tall pole, which is called a May-pole; which, being placed in a convenient part of the village, stands there, as it were, consecrated to the goddess of flowers, without the least violation offered it in the whole circle of the year. And this is not the custom of the British common people only, but it is the custom of the generality of other nations; particularly of the Italians, where Polydore Vergil tells us the youth of both sexes were accustomed to go into the fields on the calends of May, and bring thence the branches of trees, singing all the way as they came, and so place them on the doors of their houses.—This is the relic of an ancient custom among the heathen, who observed the four last days of April, and the first of May, in honour of the goddess Flora, who was imagined the deity presiding over the fruit and flowers.'

The solemnities of the May-pole are thus described by Browne in his *Britannia's Pastorals*:—

'As I have seen the Lady of the May
 Set in an arbour—
 Built by the May-pole, where the jocund swains
 Dance with the maidens to the bagpipe's strains—

When envious Night commands them to be gone,
 Call for the merry youngsters one by one,
 And for their well performance soon disposes,
 To this, a garland interwove with roses;
 To that, a carved hook, or well-wrought scrip;
 Gracing another with a cherry lip:
 To one her garter; to another then
 A handkerchief cast o'er and o'er agen;
 And none returneth empty that hath spent
 His pains to fill their rural merriment.'

The Puritans waged war with the May-poles, and indeed with all those indications of a full-hearted simplicity which were the echo of the universal harmony of Nature. The May-poles never held up their heads after the civil wars. The 'strait-laced' exulted in their fall, but we believe the people were neither wiser nor happier for their removal:—

'Happy the age, and harmless were the days,
 For then true love and amity were found,
 When every village did a May-pole raise,
 And Whitsun ales and May-games did abound;
 And all the lusty youngers in a rout,
 With merry lasses danced the rod about;
 Then Friendship to the banquet bid the guests,
 And poor men fared the better for their feasts.
 Alas, poor May-poles! what should be the cause
 That you were almost banish'd from the earth,
 Who never were rebellious to the laws?
 Your greatest crime was honest, harmless mirth.'

But the sports of May were not confined to the villages. Even the gorgeous pomp of the old Courts did not disdain to borrow a fragrance and refreshness from the joys of the people. Hall, the historian, gives us an account of 'Henry the Eighth's riding a-Maying from Greenwich to the high ground of Shooter's-hill, with Queen Katharine his wife, accompanied with many lords and ladies.' The good people of London in those days were not ashamed to let in a little of the light of creation upon their mercantile pursuits. Stow tells us, 'In the month of May, the citizens of London (of all estates), lightly in every parish, or sometimes two or three parishes joining together, had their several Mayings, and did fetch

in May-poles with divers warlike shows, with good archers, morrice-dancers, and other devices for pastime all the day long; and towards the evening they had stage-plaies, and bone-fires in the streets.'—'The gratulation of the spring-season' has no more a place amongst us; the leaves and the flowers come without a 'Hail!' from the court, the city, or the village.

There came another season—a cold wet time—and I was out of humour with May. I wrote disparagingly of the often-echoed tones of that innocent flock who frisk about in the sunshine of our north-east blights, and resolve to be Arcadian with a temperature of 60°. I will do penance for my heresies by showing how inconsistent one may be under 'skyey influences':—

In despite of our friends Shakspeare and Fletcher, and of him who did more than all of them to make May poetical, Herrick, I am constrained to assert, that never yet was May-day celebrated in such a pure spirit of pastoral innocence as might be advantageously revived in these degenerate times. I fear that during the last three hundred years it was never the good fortune of any gallant to go a-Maying before daybreak with any young ladies of very scrupulous virtue;—and I am not quite sure that Jack in the Green was ever enacted by any higher description of persons than the ragged boys of the village, whose enthusiasm for an eleemosynary penny was somewhat greater than their love of 'green fields' and 'blue skies.' I am afraid there has never been any great deal of practical poetry in England;—and I grieve to think that May-day was not often distinguished by a more refined spirit than the promiscuous gaiety of Greenwich fair; and that the homage to nature which the lads and lasses of ancient times got up for the occasion was not quite so amusing to the world at large, and certainly not more edifying, than that of the chimney-sweepers.

To carry my prosaic belief no farther back than the romantic days of the Sidneys and Raleighs, let me picture

a dance round the May-pole, at which Elizabeth was present. The scene Windsor. Her most gracious Majesty is busily employed in brushing up her Latin and her Castle at the same time—doing Horace's 'Art of Poetry' into execrable rhymes, and building private staircases for the Earl of Leicester. Her employment and the season make her aspire to be poetical. She resolves to see the May-day sports; and, sallying forth from the Castle, takes a short cut, with few attendants, through the lawn which lay before the South Gate, to the fields near the entrance of Windsor town. The May-pole stands close by the spot where now commences the Long Walk. The crowd make obsequious way for their glorious Queen, and the sports, at her command, go uninterruptedly forward. The group is indeed a most motley one. The luxuries of a white cotton gown were then unknown, and even her Majesty's experience of knitted hose was very limited. The girls frisk away, therefore, in their gray kirtles of linsey-woolsey, and their yellow stockings of coarse broadcloth; the lads are somewhat fuddled and rather greasy, and a whole garment is a considerable distinction. The Queen of the May is commanded to approach. She has a tolerable garland of violets and primroses, but a most unprepossessing visage, pimpled with exercise or ale. 'And so, my dainty maiden,' says her Majesty, 'you are in love with Zephyr, and hawthorn bushes, and morning dew, and wendest to the fields ere Phœbus gilds the drifted clouds.' 'Please your Majesty,' says the innocent, 'I'm in love with Tom Larkin, the handsome fleshmonger, and a pretty dressing my mother will give me for ganging a-Maying in the gray of the morning. There's queer work for lasses amongst these rakehellies, please your Majesty.' Elizabeth suddenly turns with a frown to her lord in waiting, and hurries back as if she had pricked her finger with a May-bush.

AMATEURS AND ACTORS.

AT the close of the year 1587, and the opening, according to our new style, of 1588, 'the Queen's Majesty being at Greenwich, there were showed, presented, and enacted before her Highness, betwixt Christmas and Shrovetide, seven plays, besides feats of activity and other shows, by the children of Paul's, her Majesty's own servants, and the gentlemen of Gray's Inn, on whom was employed divers remnants of cloth of gold and other stuff out of the store.' Such is the record of the accounts of the revels at court. Of the seven plays performed by the children of Paul's and the Queen's servants there is no memorial; but we learn from the title of a book of uncommon rarity of what nature were the 'Certaine Devises and Shewes presented Her Majestie by the Gentlemen of Grayes Inne, at her Highnesse Court in Greenwich, the twenty-eighth day of Februarie, in the thirtieth year of her Majestie's most happy raigne.'* The 'Misfortunes of Arthur, Uther Pendragon's son,' was the theme of these devices and shows. It was 'reduced into tragical notes by Thomas Hughes, one of the society of Gray's Inn.' It was 'set down as it passed from under his hands, and as it was presented, excepting certain words and lines, where some of the actors either helped their memories by brief omissions, or fitted their acting by alteration.'

Thomas Hughes also tells us that he has put 'a note at the end of such speeches as were penned by others, in lieu of these hereafter following.' It is pleasant to imagine the gentlemen of Gray's Inn sitting over their sack during the Christmas of 1587, listening to Thomas Hughes reciting

* A copy in the Garrick Collection, in the British Museum.

his doleful tragedy, cutting out a speech here, adding something wondrously telling there; the most glib of tongue modestly declining to accept the part of Arthur the king, and expressing his content with Mordred the usurper; a beardless student cheerfully agreeing to wear the robes of Guenevra the queen, and a gray-headed elder undertaking the ghost of the Duke of Cornwall. A perfect play it is, if every accessory of a play can render it perfect; for every act has an argument, and every argument a dumb-show, and every dumb-show a chorus. Here is indeed an ample field for ambitious members of the honourable society to contribute their devices; and satisfactory it is that the names of some of his fellow-labourers in this elaborate work have been preserved to us by the honour-giving Thomas Hughes. 'The dumb-shows and additional speeches were partly devised by William Fulbeck, Francis Flower, Christopher Yelverton, Francis Bacon, John Lancaster, and others, who with Master Penrودock and Lancaster directed these proceedings at Court.' Precious is this record. The salt that preserves it is the one name of Francis Bacon. Bacon, in 1588, was Reader of Gray's Inn. To the devices and shows of Hughes's tragedy—accompaniments that might lessen the tediousness of its harangues, and scatter a little beauty and repose amongst its scenes of crime and murder—Bacon would bring something of that high poetical spirit which gleams out at every page of his Philosophy. Nicholas Trotte, gentleman, penned the introduction, 'which was pronounced in manner following, namely, three Muses came upon the stage appavelled accordingly, bringing five gentlemen-students attired in their usual garments, whom one of the Muses presented to her Majesty as captives.' But the dresses, the music, the dancing to song, were probably directed by the tasteful mind who subsequently wrote, 'These things are but toys; but yet, since princes will have such things, it is better that they should be graced with elegancy than daubed with cost.*'

* Of Masques and Triumphs.—*Essay 37.*

Under the roof, then, of the old palace at Greenwich—the palace which Humphrey of Gloucester is said to have built, and where Elizabeth was born—are assembled the gentlemen of Gray's Inn and the Queen's players. The two master-spirits of their time—amongst the very greatest of all time—are there. Francis Bacon, the lawyer, and William Shakspeare, the actor, are unconscious each of the greatness of the other. The difference of their rank probably prevents that communication which might have told each something of the other's power. Master Penroodock and Master Lancaster may perhaps solicit a little of the professional advice of Burbage and his men; and the other gentlemen who penned the dumb-shows may have assisted at the conference. A flash of wit from William Shakspeare may have won a smile from the Reader of Gray's Inn; and he may have dropped a scrap of that philosophy which is akin to poetry, so as to make the young actor reverence him more highly than as the son of Elizabeth's former honest Lord Keeper. But the signs of that freemasonry by which great minds know each other could scarcely be exchanged. They would go their several ways, the one to tempt the perils and the degradation of ambition, and to find at last a refuge in philosophy; the other to be content with a well-earned competence, and gathering amidst petty strifes and jealousies, if such could disturb him, something more than happiness in the culture of that wondrous imagination which had its richest fruits in his own unequalled cheerful wisdom.

Elizabeth, the Queen, is now in her fifty-fifth year. She is ten years younger than when Paul Hentzner described her, as he saw her surrounded with her state in this same palace. The wrinkles of her face, oblong and fair, were perhaps not yet very marked. Her small black eyes, according to the same authority, were pleasant even in her age. The hooked nose, the narrow lips, and the discoloured teeth, were perhaps less noticeable when Shakspeare looked upon her in his early days. The red hair was probably not false, as it afterwards was. The small hand and the white

fingers were remarkable enough of themselves, but, sparkling with rings and jewels, the eye rested upon them. The young poet, who has been lately sworn her servant, has stood in the backward ranks of the presence-chamber, to see his dread mistress pass to chapel. The room is thronged with counsellors and courtiers. The inner doors are thrown open, and the gentlemen-pensioners, bearing their gilt battle-axes, appear in long file. The great officers of the household and ministers of state are marshalled in advance. The procession moves. When the Queen appears, sudden and frequent are the genuflexions: 'Whenever she turned her face as she was going along, every body fell down upon their knees.' But she is gracious, according to the same authority: 'Whoever speaks to her it is kneeling; now and then she raises some with her hand.' As she moves into the ante-chapel loud are the shouts of 'Long live Queen Elizabeth!' The service is soon ended, and then to dinner. While reverence has been paid to 'the only Ruler of Princes,' forms as reverent in their outward appearance have been offered even to the very place where the creature-comforts of our every-day life are to be served up to majesty. Those who cover the table with the cloth kneel three times with the utmost veneration; so do the bearers of the salt-cellar, of the plate, and of the bread. A countess, dressed in white silk, prostrates herself with the same reverence before the plate, which she rubs with bread and salt. The yeomen of the guard enter, bearing the dishes, and the lady in white silk, with her tasting-knife, presents a portion of each dish to the lips of the yeomen, not in courtesy but in suspicion of poison. The bray of trumpets and the clang of kettle-drums ring through the hall. The Queen is in her inner-chamber; and the dishes are borne in by ladies of honour with silent solemnity. When the Queen has eaten the ladies eat. Brief is the meal on this twenty-eighth of February, for the hall must be cleared for the play.

The platform in the hall at Greenwich, which was to resound with the laments of Arthur, was constructed by a

cunning workman, so as to be speedily erected and taken down. It was not so substantial an affair as the 'great stage, containing the breadth of the church from the one side to the other,' that was built in the noble chapel of King's College, Cambridge, in 1564, for the representation before the Queen of a play of Plautus. Probably in one particular the same arrangement was pursued at Greenwich as at Cambridge on that occasion: 'A multitude of the guard had every man in his hand a torch-staff; and the guard stood upon the ground by the stage-side holding their lights.' But there would be some space between the stage and the courtly audience. Raised above the rushes would the Queen sit upon her chair of state. Around her would stand her honourable maids. Behind, the eager courtiers with the ready smile when majesty vouchsafed to be pleased. Amongst them is the handsome captain of the guard, the tall and bold Raleigh,—he of the high forehead, long face, and small piercing eye.* His head is ever and anon inclined to the chair of Elizabeth. He is 'as good as a chorus,' and he can tell more of the story than the induction 'penned by Nicholas Trotte, gentleman.' He has need, however, to tell little as the play proceeds. The plot does not unravel itself; the incidents arise not clearly and naturally; but some worthy person amongst the characters every now and then informs the audience, with extreme politeness, and with the most praiseworthy completeness of detail, everything that has happened, and a good deal of what will happen; and thus the unities of time and place are preserved according to the most approved rules, and Mr. Thomas Hughes eschews the offences which were denounced by the lamented Sir Philip Sidney, of having 'Asia of the one side, and Africa of the other, and so many other kingdoms that the player when he comes in must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived.† The author of the 'Misfortunes of Arthur' avoids this by

* 'He had a most remarkable aspect, an exceeding high forehead, long-faced, and sour eye-lidded—a kind of pig-eye.'—*Aubrey*.

† Defence of Poesy.

the somewhat drowsy method of substituting the epic narrative for the dramatic action. The Queen whispers to Raleigh that the regular players are more amusing.

A day or two passes on, and her Majesty again wants diversion. She bends her mind manfully to public affairs, and it is a high and stirring time; but, if it only be to show her calmness to her people, she will not forego her accustomed revels. Her own players are sent for; and the summons is hasty and peremptory for some fitting novelty. Will the comedy which young Shakspeare has written for the Blackfriars, and which has been already in rehearsal, be suited for the court? The cautious sagacity of old Burbage is willing to confide in it. Without attempting too close an imitation of court manners, its phrases he conceives are refined, its lines are smooth. There are some slight touches of satire, at which it bethinks him the Queen will laugh; but there is nothing personal, for Don Armado is a Spaniard. The verse, he holds, sounds according to the right stately fashion in the opening of the play:—

‘ Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live register’d upon our brazen tombs.’

The young poet is a little licentious, however; in the management of his verse as he proceeds; he has not Marlowe’s lofty cadences, which roll out so nobly from the full mouth. But the lad will mend. Truly he has a comic vein. If Kempe takes care to utter what is put down for him in Costard, her Majesty will forget poor Tarleton. And then the compliments to the ladies:—

‘ They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That show, contain, and nourish all the world.’

Elizabeth will take the compliments to herself. The young man’s play shall be ‘preferred.’

It is a bright sparkling morning—‘the first mild day of March’—as the Queen’s barge waits for Burbage and his fellows at the Blackfriars Stairs. They are soon floating down the tide. Familiar as that scene now is to him, William Shakspeare cannot look upon it without wonder

and elation of heart. The venerable Bridge, with its hundred legends and traditions; the Tower, where scenes have been acted that haunt his mind, and must be embodied some day for the people's instruction. And now, verses, some of which he has written in the quiet of his beloved Stratford, characters that he has drawn from the stores of his youthful observation, are to be presented for the amusement of the Queen. But, with a most modest estimate of his own powers, he is sure that he has heard some very indifferent poetry, which nevertheless has won the Queen's approbation, with many jokes, at which the Queen has laughed, that scarcely have seemed to him fitting for royal ears. If his own verses are not listened to, perhaps the liveliness of his little Moth may command a smile. At any rate there will be some show in his pageant of the Nine Worthies. He will meet the issue courageously.

The Queen's players have now possession of the platform in the hall. Burbage has ample command of tailors, and of stuff out of the store. Pastebord and buckram are at his service in abundance. The branches are garnished, the arras is hung. The Queen and her court are seated. But the experiment of the new play soon ceases to be a doubtful one. Those who can judge, and the Queen is amongst the number, listen with eagerness to something different to the feebleness of the pastoral and mythological stories to which they have been accustomed. 'The summer's nightingale'* himself owns that a real poet has arisen, where poetry was scarcely looked for. The Queen commands that rewards, in some eyes more precious than the accustomed gloves, should be bestowed upon her players. Assuredly the delightful comedy of 'Love's Labour's Lost,' containing as it does in every line the evidence of being a youthful work, was very early one of those

'Flights upon the banks of Thames
That so did take Eliza.'

* Raleigh is so called by Spenser.



Ben Jonson.

BEN JONSON'S MOTHER.

IN Hartshorn Lane, near Charing Cross, about the year 1580, dwells Mr. Thomas Fowler, a master bricklayer. He had married, in 1575, Mrs. Margaret Jonson, a widow ; and had become the protector of her little boy, Benjamin, then about a year and a half old.

Benjamin is now in his sixth year. He duly attends the parish school in St. Martin's Church ; for his father was 'a grave minister of the gospel,' and his mother is anxious that her only child, poor although he must be, shall lack no advantages of education. We see the sturdy boy daily pacing to school through the rough and miry way of that half-rural district. In his play-hours he is soon in the fields, picking blackberries in Hedge Lane, or flying his kite by the Windmill in Saint Giles's. His father-in-law is a plain, industrious, trusty man,—not rich enough to undertake any of the large works which the luxurious wants of

the town present; and oftentimes interfered with, in the due course of his labour, by royal proclamations against the increase of houses, which are rigidly enforced when a humble man desires to build a cottage. But young Ben has found friends. To the parish school sometimes comes Master Camden; and he observes the bold boy, always at the head of his class, and not unfrequently having his 'clear and fair skin' disfigured by combats with his dirty companions, who litter about the alleys of Saint Martin's Lane. The boy has won good Master Camden's heart; and so, in due time, he proposes to remove him to Westminster School.

Let us look at the Shadow of his Mother, as she debates this question with her husband, at their frugal supper. 'The boy must earn his living,' says the bricklayer. 'He is strong enough to be of help to me. He can mix the mortar; he will soon be able to carry the hod. Learning! stuff! he has had learning enow, for all the good it will do him.'—'Thomas Fowler,' responds the mother, 'if I wear my fingers to the bone, my boy shall never carry the hod. Master Camden, a good man, and learned, will pay for his schooling. Shall we not give him his poor meals and his pallet-bed? Master Camden says he will make his way. I owe it to the memory of him who is gone, that Benjamin shall be a scholar and perhaps a minister.'—'Yes; and be persecuted for his opinions, as his father was. These are ticklish times, Margaret—the lowest are the safest. Ben is passionate, and obstinate, and will quarrel for a straw. Make him a scholar, and he becomes Papist or Puritan—the quiet way is not for the like of him. He shall be apprenticed to me, wife, and earn his daily bread safely and honestly.' Night after night is the debate renewed. But the mother triumphs. Ben does go to Westminster School. He has hard fare at home; he has to endure many a taunt as he sits apart in the Abbey cloisters, intent upon his task. But Camden is his instructor and his friend. The bricklayer's boy fights his way to distinction.

Look again at the Shadow of that proud Mother as, after

three or four anxious years, she hears of his advancement. He has an exhibition. He is to remove to Cambridge. Her Benjamin must be a bishop. Thomas Fowler is incredulous—and he is not generous: ‘When Benjamin leaves this roof he must shift for himself, wife.’ The mother drops one tear when her boy departs;—the leathern purse which holds her painful savings is in Benjamin’s pocket.

It is a summer night of 1590, when Benjamin Jonson walks into the poor house of Hartshorn Lane. He is travel-stained and weary. His jerkin is half hidden beneath a dirty cloak. That jerkin, which looked so smart in a mother’s eyes when last they parted, is strangely shrunk—or, rather, has not the spare boy grown into a burly youth, although the boy’s jerkin must still do service? The bricklayer demands his business;—the wife falls upon his neck. And well may the bricklayer know him not. His face is ‘pimpled;’ hard work and irregular living have left their marks upon him. The exhibition has been insufficient for his maintenance. His spirit has been sorely wounded. The scholar of sixteen thinks he should prefer the daily bread which is to be won by the labour of his hands, to the hunger for which pride has no present solace. Benjamin Jonson becomes a bricklayer.

And now, for two years, has the mother—her hopes wholly gone, her love only the same—to bear up under the burden of conflicting duties. The young man duly works at the most menial tasks of his business. He has won his way to handle a trowel;—but he is not comfortable in all things. ‘Wife,’ says Thomas Fowler, ‘that son of yours will never prosper. Cannot he work,—and cannot he eat his meals,—without a Greek book in his vest? This very noon must he seat himself, at dinner-hour, in the shade of the wall in Chancery Lane, on which he had been labouring; and then comes a reverend Benchman and begins discourse with him; and Ben shows him his book—and they talk as if they were equal. Margaret, he is too grand for me; he

is above his trade.'—'Shame on ye, husband! Does he not work, honestly and deftly? and will you grudge him his books?'—'He haunts the playhouses; he sits in the pit—and cracks nuts—and hisses or claps hands, in a way quite unbeseeming a bricklayer's apprentice. Margaret, I fear he will come to no good.' One night there is a fearful quarrel. It is late when Benjamin returns home. In silence and darkness, the son and mother meet. She is resolved. 'Benjamin, my son, my dear son, we will endure this life no longer. There is a sword;—it was your grandfather's. A gentleman wore it; a gentleman shall still wear it. Go to the Low Countries. Volunteers are called for. There is an expedition to Ostend. Take with you these few crowns, and God prosper you.'

Another year, and Benjamin's campaign is ended. At the hearth in Hartshorn Lane sits Margaret Fowler—in solitude. There will be no more strife about her son. Death has settled the controversy. Margaret is very poor. Her trade is unprosperous; for the widow is defrauded by her servants. 'Mother, there is my grandfather's sword—it has done service; and, now, I will work for you.'—'How, my son?'—'I will be a bricklayer again.' We see the Shadow of the Mother, as she strives to make her son content. He has no longer 'the lime and mortar' hands with which it was his after-fate to be reproached; but he bestows the master's eye upon his mother's workmen. Yet he has hours of leisure. There is a chamber in the old house now filled with learned books. He reads, and he writes, as his own pleasure dictates. 'Mother,' he one day says, 'I wish to marry.'—'Do so, my son; bring your wife home; we will dwell together.' So a few years roll on. He and his wife weep

'Mary, the daughter of their youth.'

But there is an event approaching which sets aside sorrow. 'Daughter,' says the ancient lady, 'we must to the Rose Playhouse to-night. There is a new play to be acted, and

that play is Benjamin's.'—'Yes, mother, he has had divers moneys already. Not much, I wot, seeing the labour he has given to this "Comedy of Humours"—five shillings, and ten shillings, and, once, a pound.'—'No matter, daughter, he will be famous: I always knew he would be famous.' A calamity clouds that fame. The play-writer has quarrels on every side. In the autumn of 1528, Philip Henslowe, the manager of 'The Lord Admiral's men,' writes thus to his son-in-law, Alleyn:—'Since you were with me, I have lost one of my company, which hurteth me greatly—that is, Gabriel; for he is slain in Hogsden Fields, by the hands of Benjamin Jonson, bricklayer.' Twenty years after, the great dramatist, the laureat, thus relates the story to Drummond: 'Being appealed to the fields, he had killed his adversary, which had him hurt in the arm, and whose sword was ten inches longer than his; for the which he was imprisoned, and almost at the gallows.' There is the proud Shadow of a Roman Matron hovering about his cell, in those hours when the gallows loomed darkly in the future.

The scholar and the poet has won his fame. Bricklayer no longer, Ben is the companion of the illustrious. Shakspeare hath 'wit-combats' with him; Camden and Selden try his metal in learned controversies; Raleigh, and Beaumont, and Donne, and Fletcher, exchange with him 'words of subtle flame' at 'The Mermaid.' But a new trouble arises—James is come to the throne. Hear Jonson's account of a remarkable transaction:—'He was delated by Sir James Murray to the king, for writing something against the Scots, in a play, "Eastward Ho," and voluntarily imprisoned himself, with Chapman and Marston, who had written it amongst them. The report was, that they should then have had their ears cut, and noses.' They are at length released. We see the shadow of a banquet, which the poet gave to his friends in commemoration of his deliverance. There is a joyous company of immortals at that feast. There, too, is that loving and faithful Mother. The wine-cups are flowing; there are song and jest, elo-

quence, and the passionate earnestness with which such friends speak when the heart is opened. But there is one, whose Shadow we now see, more passionate and more earnest than any of that company. She rises, with a full goblet in her hand:—'Son, I drink to thee. Benjamin, my beloved son, thrice I drink to thee. See ye this paper; one grain of the subtle drug which it holds is death. Even as we now pledge each other in rich canary, would I have pledged thee in lusty strong poison, had thy sentence taken execution. Thy shame would have been my shame, and neither of us should have lived after it.'

'She was no churl,' says Benjamin.

ENGLISH POETS IN SCOTLAND.

I HAVE not hesitated to express a belief that Shakspeare visited Scotland in 1601, as one of the company of English players who performed at Aberdeen that year, under the management of Lawrence Fletcher. The question cannot be satisfactorily settled; but in the following paper I have taken a rapid view of the supposed journey, as an illustration of the aspects which Scotland would present to an Englishman a little while before the accession of James.*

In the summer of 1618, Ben Jonson undertook the extraordinary task of travelling to Edinburgh on foot. Bacon said to him, with reference to his project, 'He loved not to see poesy go on other foot than poetical Dactylus and Spondaeus.†' Jonson seems to have been proud of his exploit; for in his 'News from the New World discovered in the Moon,' a masque, presented at Court in 1620, he makes a printer say, 'One of our greatest poets (I know not how good a one) went to Edinburgh on foot, and came back.' According to Drummond he was 'to write his foot pilgrimage hither, and call it a discovery.' We have no traces of Jonson in this journey, except what we derive from the 'Conversations with Drummond,' and the notice of honest John Taylor, in his 'Pennilesse Pilgrimage':— 'I went to Leith, where I found my long-approved and assured good friend, Master Benjamin Jonson, at one Master John Stuart's house.' Jonson remained long enough in Scotland to become familiar with its hospitable people and its noble scenery. He wrote a poem, in which he called Edinburgh

'The heart of Scotland, Britain's other eye.'

* This, and two preceding papers, p. 135 and p. 147, formed chapters in the original edition of 'William Shakspeare, a Biography;' but were omitted by me in the succeeding editions.

† Conversations with Drummond.

'He hath intention,' saith Drummond, 'to write a fisher or pastoral play, and set the stage of it in the Lomond Lake.' After his return to London he earnestly solicits Drummond, by letter, to send him 'some things concerning the Loch of Lomond.' We find nothing in Jonson's poetry that gives us an impression that he had caught any inspiration from the country of mountains and lakes. We have no internal evidence at all that he had been in Scotland. We have no token of the impress of its mountain scenery upon his mind approaching to the distinctness of a famous passage in Shakspeare—a solitary passage in a poet who rarely indeed *describes* any scenery, but one which could scarcely have been written without accurate knowledge of the realities to which 'black Vesper's pageants' have resemblance:—

'Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish;
A vapour, sometime, like a bear or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendant rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon 't that nod unto the world
And mock our eyes with air.'*

John Taylor, homely as he is, may better enable us to trace Shakspeare's probable course, assuming that the journey was undertaken. Taylor, travelling on foot, was a week in reaching Lichfield, passing through Coventry. He was another week, filling up some time with over-much carousing, before he got out of Manchester. Preston detained him three days with its jollity; and it was another week before, passing over the hills of Westmoreland, he reached Carlisle. Shakspeare, setting out on horseback from Stratford, would reach Carlisle by easy stages in six days. Taylor stops not to describe the merry city. It was more to his purpose to enjoy the 'good entertainment' of which he there 'found store,' than to survey its castle and its cathedral; or to look from its elevated points upon fertile meadows watered by the Eden or the broad Frith, or the distant summits of Crossfell and Skiddaw. Would

* Antony and Cleopatra, one of Shakspeare's later plays.

he had preserved for us some of the ballads that he must have heard in his revelries, that told of the wondrous feats of the bold outlaws who lived in the greenwood around

‘Carlisle, in the north countree.’

Assuredly Shakspeare had heard of Adam Bell, the brave archer of Inglewood: ‘He that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulder and called Adam.’* It is pleasant to believe that some snatches of old minstrelsy might have recreated his solitary journey as he rode near the borderland.

Sir Walter Scott, in the delightful Introduction to his ‘Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,’ says, ‘The accession of James to the English crown converted the extremity into the centre of his kingdom.’ The Scottish poet would seem to have borrowed the idea from a very humble English brother of the craft:—

‘For now those crowns are both in one combin’d,
Those former borders that each one confin’d
Appears to me (as I do understand)
To be almost the centre of the land:
This was a blessed heaven-expounded riddle
To thrust great kingdoms’ skirts into the middle.’†

John Taylor trudges from Carlisle into Annandale, wading through the Esk, and wondering that he saw so little difference between the two countries, seeing that Scotland had its sun and sky, its sheep, and corn, and good ale. But he tells us that in former times this borderland

‘Was the curs’d climate of rebellious crimes.’

According to him, and he was not far wrong, pell-mell fury and hurly-burly, spoiling and wasting, sharking, shifting, cutting throats, and thieving, constituted the practice both of Annandale and Cumberland. When Taylor made his pilgrimage, the existing generation would have a very fresh recollection of these outrages of former times. If Shakspeare

* Much Ado About Nothing.

† Taylor’s ‘Pennilesse Pilgrimage.’

travelled over this ground he would be more familiar with the passionate hatreds of the borderers, and would hear many a song which celebrated their deadly feuds, and kept alive the spirit of rapine and vengeance. As recently as 1596, the famous Raid of Carlisle had taken place, when the Lord of Buccleuch, then Warden of Liddesdale, surprised the Castle of Carlisle, and carried off a daring Scotch free-booter, Kinmont Willie, who had been illegally seized by the Warden of the West Marches of England, Lord Scrope. The old ballad which, fifty years ago, was preserved by tradition on the western borders of Scotland, was perhaps sung by many a sturdy clansman at the beginning of the seventeenth century:—

‘ Wi’ coulthers, and wi’ forehammers,
 We garr’d the bars bang merrilie,
 Until we came to the inner prison,
 Where Willie o’ Kinmont he did lie.
 And when we came to the lower prison,
 Where Willie o’ Kinmont he did lie—
 “ O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,*
 Upon the morn that thou ’s to die?” †

But the feuds of the Scotch and English borderers were not the only causes of insecurity on the western frontier. If the great dramatic poet, who has painted so vividly the desolation of civil war in his own country, had passed through Annandale in 1601, he would have seen the traces of a petty civil war which was then raging between the clans of Maxwell and Johnstone, who a few years before had met in deadly conflict on the very ground over which he would pass. The lord of Maxwell, with a vast band of followers, had been slain without quarter. This was something different from the quiet security of England—a state of comparative blessedness that Shakspeare subse-

* The snatch of melody in Lear, in all likelihood part of an English song, will occur to the reader:—

‘ Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?’

† Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, vol. ii. p. 58.

quently described in Cranmer's prophecy of the glories of Elizabeth:—

‘ In her days every man shall eat in safety,
Under his own vine, what he plants ; and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.’*

The penniless pilgrim travelled over this ground when the security of England had been extended to Scotland ; and he found no greater dangers than wading through the Esk and the Annan, and no severer evils than sleeping in a poor hut upon the hard ground, with dirty pigeons roosting around him.†

Place the poet safely in Edinburgh, after he has made his solitary journey of three hundred miles, through unaccustomed scenery, partly amongst foreign people and strange manners. A new world has been opened to him. He has left behind him his old fertile midland counties, their woods, their corn-fields now ripe for the harvest, to pass over wild moor-lands with solemn mountains shutting in the distance, now following the course of a brawling stream through a fertile valley cultivated and populous, and then again climbing the summit of some gloomy fell, from which he looks around, and may dream he is in a land where man has never disturbed the wild deer and the eagle. He looks at one time upon

‘ Turfy mountains, where live nibbling sheep,
And flat meads thatch’d with stover ;’

and he may say with the Water-Poet, ‘ I thought myself in England still.’ He is presently in the gorge of the mountains, and there are fancies awakening in him which are to shape themselves not into description, but into the delineations of high passions which are to be created out of lofty moods of the mind. In Edinburgh he meets his fellows.

* Henry VIII., Act v.

† Taylor tells several portions of his adventures in plain prose ; and we know of no better picture of the country and its manners than his simple descriptions furnish.

The probability is that the Court is not there, for it is the hunting season. Holyrood is a winter palace; and Edinburgh is not then a city particularly attractive to the Scottish king, who has not forgotten the perils and indignities he has endured through the influence of the stern and uncompromising ministers of religion, who would have made the temporal power wholly submissive to the spiritual. The timid man has conquered, but all his actions are there viewed with jealousy and malevolence; and the English players may afford him safer pleasures in other places than where their 'unruliness and immodest behaviour' are uncharitably denounced daily from the pulpit. Shakspeare may rest at Edinburgh a day or two; and the impressions of that city will not easily be forgotten:—a town in which the character of the architecture would seem to vie with the bold scenery in which it is placed, full of historical associations, the seat of Scottish learning and authority, built for strength and defence as much as for magnificence and comfort, whose mansions are fastnesses that would resist an assault from a rival chief or a lawless mob. He looks for a short space upon the halls where she, who fell before the arbitrary power of his own Queen, lived in her days of beauty and youthfulness, surrounded by false friends and desperate enemies, weak and miserable. He sees the pulpits from which Knox thundered, the University which James had founded, and the castle for whose possession Scotch and English had fought with equal bravery, but varying success. He has gained materials for future reflection.

The country palaces of the Scottish kings inhabited at that period were Linlithgow, Stirling, and Falkland. The gentle lake, the verdant park of Linlithgow were suited for a summer palace. It was the favourite residence of Mary of Guise, queen of James V. 'Gude Schir David Lindsay,' Lion King at Arms under James V., here presented to the Court and people his 'Satyre of the Three Estaitis;' and, whatever be his defects, no one can doubt that he possessed a strong vein of humour, and had the

courage to speak out boldly of public vice and private immorality, as a poet ought to speak. The conclusion of the drama offers a pleasant sample of the freedom with which these old writers could address even a courtly audience :—

‘ Now, let ilk man his way avance,
Let sum ga drink, and sum ga dance :
Menstrell, blaw up ane brawll of France,
Let se quha hobbils best :
For I will rin, incontinent,
To the tavern, or ever I stent :
And pray to God, omnipotent,
To send you all gude rest.’

If the halls of Linlithgow had witnessed the performance of one of Shakspeare's comedies by the company of Lawrence Fletcher, no changes in taste during half a century could be more striking than such a contrast of the new drama of England with the old drama of Scotland. But we apprehend that Lawrence Fletcher went in another direction.

The English comedians, servants to James VI., might have contributed to the solace and recreation of the King in the noble castle where he was born. Seven years before, Stirling had been the scene of rare festivities, on the occasion of the baptism of Prince Henry. It was a place fit for a monarch's residence. From these walls he could look at once upon the fertility and the grandeur of his dominions—its finest river, its boldest mountains, the vale of the Forth, and the summits of Ben Lomond. He could here cherish the proudest recollections of his country's independence. Stirling must have been dear to James as the residence of his boyhood, where he learnt to make Latin verses from Buchanan, the most elegant of pedagogues. He would, perhaps, be prouder of his school-room in the old castle than of its historical associations, and would look with greater delight upon the little valley where he had once seen a gentle tournament, than upon the battle-fields of Cambuskenneth and Bannockburn. Stirling was better fitted for the ceremonial displays of the Scottish Court than the quiet residence of a monarch like James VI.

We have seen no record of such displays in the autumn of 1601.

Dunfermline, called 'The Queen's House,' was in the possession of Anne of Denmark, and her son Charles was here born in November, 1600. It was a quiet occasional retreat from the turmoil of Edinburgh. But the favourite residence of James in the 'latter summer' and autumn was Falkland. The account published, by authority, of the Gowrie conspiracy, opens with a distinct picture of the King's habits: 'His Majesty having his residence at Falkland, and being daily at the buck-hunting (as his use is in that season), upon the fifth day of August, being Tuesday, he rode out to the park, between six and seven of the clock in the morning, the weather being wonderful pleasant and seasonable.' A record in Melville's Diary,* within three weeks of this period, gives us another picture of the King and the Court: 'At that time, being in Falkland, I saw a fuscambulus Frenchman play strong and incredible praticks upon stented [stretched] tackle in the palace-close before the King, Queen, and whole Court. This was politicly done to mitigate the Queen and people for Gowrie's slaughter; even then was Henderson tried before us, and Gowrie's pedagogue who had been buted [booted, tortured].' In the great hall of the palace of Falkland, of which enough remains to show its extent and magnificence, we think it probable that Lawrence Fletcher and his fellows exhibited very different performances in the following autumn. They would have abundant novelties to present to the Scottish Court, for all would be new. At the second Christmas after James had ascended the English throne, the early plays of Shakspeare were as much in request at the Court as those which belong to a later period. The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, Henry V., The Merchant of Venice, all being the productions of the previous century, were produced at Court, and the King commanded The

* Quoted in Pitcairn's 'Trials,' vol. ii. p. 238.

Merchant of Venice a second time. The constant performance of Shakspeare's plays, as shown by the accounts of the Revels, at this early period after James's accession, would seem to indicate something like a previous acquaintance with them; and this acquaintance we may justly assume took place upon the visit of Lawrence Fletcher and his company to Scotland in the autumn of 1601.

From Falkland to Aberdeen would be a considerable journey in those days of neglected roads, when rivers had to be forded, and mountains crossed by somewhat perilous paths. It is not improbable that the company halted at Perth, which was within a morning's ride of Falkland. The Presbytery of that town were more favourably disposed some twelve years before to theatrical performances than the ministers of religion at Edinburgh; they tolerated them under wise restrictions. The King, in 1601, was anxious to stand well with the people of Perth, and he became a burghess of the city, and banqueted with the citizens. It 'was politicly done,' as Melville says of the French rope-dancer. He might venture in that city to send his servants the players to amuse the people; for those who had supported his leanings towards Episcopalian Church government were strong there, and would gladly embrace any occasion to cultivate amusements that were disagreeable to their ascetic opponents. The same feelings would prevail still more strongly at Aberdeen. The young citizens of Bon Accord, as it was called, clung to the amusements of the older times, the Robin Hoods and Queens of May, in spite of the prohibitions of their magistrates. The Kirk Session prohibited maskers and dancers, but the people still danced; and upon the solemn occasion when the popish Earls of Huntley and Errol were received into the bosom of the Kirk, upon renouncing their errors, there was music and masking around the Cross, and universal jollity was mingled with the more solemn ceremonials. The people of Aberdeen were a loyal people, and we are not surprised that they welcomed the King's players with rewards and honours.

There is preserved, in the Library of Advocates, a very

curious description of Aberdeen in the middle of the seventeenth century, written originally in Latin by James Gordon, parson of Rothemay, with a contemporary translation. The latter has been printed by the Spalding Club. The changes during half a century would not be very considerable; and the English players would therefore have sojourned in a city which, according to this authority, 'exceeds not only the rest of the towns in the north of Scotland, but likewise any city whatsoever of that same latitude, for greatness, beauty, and frequency of trading.' Gordon's description is accompanied by a large and well-executed plan, which has also been published; and certainly the new and old towns of Aberdeen, as they existed in those days, were spacious, and judiciously laid out, with handsome public buildings and well-arranged streets, backed by wooded gardens;—a pleasant place to look upon, with fruitful fields immediately around it, though 'anywhere you pass a mile without the town the country is barren-like, the hills scraggy, the plains full of marshes and mosses.' The parson of Rothemay, with a filial love for his native place, says, 'The air is temperate and healthful about it, and it may be that the citizens owe the acuteness of their wits thereunto, and their civil inclinations.' This, indeed, was a community fitted to appreciate the treasures which Lawrence Fletcher and his fellows would display before them; and it is to the honour of Aberdeen that, in an age of strong prejudices, they welcomed the English players in a way which vindicated their own character for 'wisdom, learning, gallantry, breeding, and civil conversation.' It is not to those who so welcomed them that we must chiefly lay the charge of the witch persecutions of that time. In almost every case these atrocities were committed under the sanction of the Kirk Session; and in the same way, when a stern religious asceticism became the dominant principle in England, the feeling of religious earnestness, lofty as it was in many essentials, too often was allied with superstitious enthusiasm, which blinded the reason and blunted the feelings as

fearfully as the worst errors of the ancient Church. The tolerant Shakspeare would have listened to the stories of these persecutions with the same feelings with which he regarded the ruins of the Dominican convent at Aberdeen, which was razed to the ground in 1560. A right principle was in each case wrongly directed: 'There is some soul of goodness in things evil.'

We have thus, there being ample documentary evidence that Shakspeare's Company was at Aberdeen in October, 1601, assumed that Shakspeare would naturally be of the number. His tragedy of *Macbeth* exhibits traces of local knowledge which might have been readily collected by him in the exact path of such a journey. We have attempted very slightly to sketch the associations with which he might have been surrounded during this progress, putting these matters, of course, hypothetically, as materials for the reader to embody in his own imagination. We may conclude the subject by very briefly tracing his path homeward.

Honest John Taylor, who seems to have been ready for every kindness that fortune could bestow upon him, left Edinburgh in better guise than he came thither: 'Within the port, or gate, called the Netherbow, I discharged my pockets of all the money I had: and as I came penniless within the walls of that city at my first coming thither, so now, at my departing from thence, I came moneyless out of it again.' But he soon found a worthy man ready to help him in his straits: 'Master James Acmoote, coming for England, said, that if I would ride with him, that neither I nor my horse should want betwixt that place and London.' If we take Taylor as our guide, we may see how Shakspeare journeyed with his fellows, upon the great high road between Edinburgh and the city of their own Blackfriars. On the first day they would ride to Dunbar; on the second day they would reach Berwick. They might lodge at an inn, but the exuberance of the ancient Scotch hospitality would probably afford them all welcome in the stronghold of some wealthy laird. Taylor thus describes the hospitality

of his hosts at Coberspath [Cockburnspath], between Dunbar and Berwick: 'Suppose ten, fifteen, or twenty men and horses came to lodge at their house, the men shall have flesh, tame and wild fowl, fish, with all variety of good cheer, good lodging, and welcome; and the horses shall want neither hay nor provender: and at the morning at their departure the reckoning is just nothing. This is this worthy gentleman's use, his chief delight being only to give strangers entertainment gratis.' His description of the hospitality 'in Scotland beyond Edinburgh' is more remarkable: 'I have been at houses like castles for building; the master of the house his beaver being his blue bonnet, one that will wear no other shirts but of the flax that grows on his own ground, and of his wife's, daughters', or servants' spinning; that hath his stockings, hose, and jerkin of the wool of his own sheep's backs; that never (by his pride of apparel) caused mercer, draper, silk-man, embroiderer, or haberdasher to break and turn bankrupt: and yet this plain homespun fellow keeps and maintains thirty, forty, fifty servants, or perhaps more, every day relieving three or four score poor people at his gate; and, besides all this, can give noble entertainment, for four or five days together, to five or six Earls and Lords, besides Knights, Gentlemen, and their followers, if they be three or four hundred men and horse of them, where they shall not only feed but feast, and not feast but banquet; this is a man that desires to know nothing so much as his duty to God and his King, whose greatest cares are to practise the works of piety, charity, and hospitality: he never studies the consuming art of fashionless fashions, he never tries his strength to bear four or five hundred acres on his back at once; his legs are always at liberty—not being fettered with golden garters, and manacled with artificial roses, whose weight (sometime) is the relics of some decayed lordship. Many of these worthy housekeepers there are in Scotland: amongst some of them I was entertained; from whence I did truly gather these aforesaid observations.'

The Water-Poet passes through Berwick without a word.

The poet of Henry IV. would associate it with vivid recollections of his own Hotspur :

‘ He had byn a march-man all hys dayes,
And kepte Barwyke-upon-Twede.’*

He was now in the land of old heroic memories, which had reached the ear of his boyhood in his own peaceful Stratford, through the voice of the wandering harper; and which Froissart had recorded in a narrative as spirited as the fancies of ‘the old song of Percy and Douglas.’ The dark-blue Cheviots lifted their summits around him, and beneath them were the plains which the Douglas wasted, who

‘ Boldely brente Northomberlande,
And haryed many a towyn.’

He was in the land which had so often been the battle-field of Scotch and English in the chivalrous days, when war appeared to be carried on as much for sport as for policy, and a fight and a hunting were associated in the same song. The great battle of Otterbourne, in 1388, ‘was as valiantly foughten as could be devised,’ says Froissart, ‘for Englishmen on the one party, and Scots on the other party, are good men of war: for when they meet there is a hard fight without sparring; there is no love between them as long as spears, axes, or daggers will endure, but lay on each upon other; and when they be well beaten, and that the one part hath obtained the victory, they then glorify so in their deeds of arms and are so joyful, that such as be taken they shall be ransomed or they go out of the field, so that shortly each of them is so content with other, that at their departing courteously they will say, God thank you; but in fighting one with another there is no play nor sparring.’ The spirit that moved the Percy and Douglas at Otterbourne animated the Percy and another Douglas at Holmedon in 1402.

‘ On Holy-rood day, the gallant Hotspur there,
Young Harry Percy, and brave Archibald,

* The Battle of Otterbourne.

That ever valiant and approved Scot,
 At Holmedon met,
 Where they did spend a sad and bloody hour.*

The scene of this conflict was not many miles from Berwick. A knowledge of these localities was not necessary for Shakspeare to produce his magnificent creation of Hotspur. But in a journey through Northumberland the recollections of Hotspur would be all around him. At Alnwick, he would ride by the gate which Hotspur built, and look upon the castle in which the Percies dwelt. Two centuries had passed since Hotspur fell at Shrewsbury; but his memory lived in the ballads of his land, and the dramatic poet had bestowed upon it a more lasting glory. The play of Henry IV. was written before the union of England and Scotland under one crown, and when the two countries had constant feuds which might easily have broken out into actual war. But Shakspeare, at the very time when the angry passions of England were excited by the Raid of Carlisle, thus made his favourite hero teach the English to think honourably of their gallant neighbours :

P. Henry. The noble Scot, Lord Douglas, when he saw
 The fortune of the day quite turn'd from him,
 The noble Percy slain, and all his men
 Upon the foot of fear, fled with the rest;
 And, falling from a hill, he was so bruised
 That the pursuers took him. At my tent
 The Douglas is; and I beseech your grace
 I may dispose of him.

K. Henry. With all my heart.

P. Henry. Then, brother John of Lancaster, to you
 This honourable bounty shall belong :
 Go to the Douglas, and deliver him
 Up to his pleasure, ransomless, and free :
 His valour, shown upon our crests to-day,
 Hath taught us how to cherish such high deeds,
 Even in the bosom of our adversaries.†

* Henry IV., Part I. Act i. Scene 1.

† Ibid., Act v. Scene 5.

John Taylor contrived to be eighteen days on the road riding from Edinburgh to London: he was fifteen days in his progress from Berwick to Islington. Lawrence Fletcher and his fellows would make greater speed, and linger not so recklessly over the good cheer of the inns and mansions that opened their gates to them. 'The way from Berwick to York and so to London' is laid down very precisely in Harrison's 'Description of England;' and the several stages present a total of 260 miles. The route thus given makes a circuit of several miles at Tadcaster; and yet it is 82 miles shorter than the present distance from Berwick to London. Taylor says, 'The Scots do allow almost as large measure of their miles as they do of their drink.' So it would appear they did also in England in the days of Shakspeare.

ROBERT BURTON'S POETICAL COMMONWEALTH.

THE only book that took Samuel Johnson out of his bed two hours before he wished to rise, will scarcely do for a busy man to touch before breakfast. There is no leaving it, except by an effort. I have just taken it up to look for a quotation, as many better scholars than myself have done, and I cannot be satisfied to read on—with 'The Times' of the day, borrowed for an hour, lying unread—but I must needs write a paper suggested by this same treasured 'Anatomy of Melancholy.' I might do worse.

In the Introduction, 'Democritus to the Reader,' I am forcibly struck with the mode in which a student of Christchurch deals with many of the great social questions that are still under discussion after the lapse of two centuries and a quarter. How he satirizes, and how he would reform. Statesmen might have learned something from this 'severe student, devourer of authors, melancholy and humourous,'* Robert Burton,—as statesmen do contrive, unwilling as they may be, to pick up something of the great general wisdom of humanity from scholars and poets,—if they had looked into a few pages of this 'Introduction,' and not stopped too readily at this sentence:—'Boccalinus may cite Commonwealths to come before Apollo, and seek to reform the world itself by Commissioners; but there is no remedy.' The governors and the governed are opening their eyes; so some may perhaps hear what 'Democritus Junior' has to say when he proposes an imaginary condition of improvement:—'I will, to satisfy and please myself, make an Utopia of my own, a new Atlantis, a

* Anthony à Wood.

poetical Commonwealth of my own, in which I will freely domineer, build cities, make laws, statutes, as I list myself.' What sort of cities would he build? He would have them, for the most part, situate 'upon navigable rivers or lakes, creeks or havens.' That is, he would have them situate where there are facilities for communication. How imperfectly the use of a river as a cheap highway was known in the days when canals and railroads were not, may be seen in a curious tract of our old friend John Taylor.* He tells the people of Salisbury that their city is so much overcharged with poor, as having in three parishes near three thousand; that their river is not navigable to Christchurch; that it might be made as passable as the Thames from Brentford to Windsor; and that by means of such navigation the loiterers might be turned into labourers, and penury into plenty. Burton, writing exactly at the same time, bitterly attacks the ignorance and neglect out of which comes poverty:—'Amongst our towns, there is only one, London, that bears the face of a city, *Epitome Britannicæ*, a famous Emporium, second to none beyond seas, a noble mart; and yet in my slender judgment defective in many things. The rest, some few excepted (York, Bristow, Norwich, Worcester), are in mean estate, ruinous most part, poor and full of beggars, by reason of their decayed trades, neglected and bad policy, idleness of their inhabitants, riot, which had rather beg or loiter, and be ready to starve, than work.' And so Democritus would build other cities, and encourage other sorts of people. 'I will have fair and broad streets.' How long did we persevere in making our streets ugly and narrow! 'I will have convenient churches.' Good. 'I will have convenient churches, and separate places to bury the dead in; not churchyards.' And so an Oxford scholar, in the year 1621, is telling the people of England what her rulers only found out in the middle of the nineteenth century, and have at last given us a 'Burial Act.' He would have, too, 'opportune market-places of all sorts,

* A Discovery by Sea from London to Salisbury, 1623.

for corn, meat, cattle.' Was Smithfield, the garden of delight for civic wisdom, 'opportune'—locally convenient? He would send 'trades, noisome or fulsome for bad smells, such as butchers' slaughter-houses, chandlers, curriers, to remote places.' In the city of London, in our time, the slaughter-houses and the book-warehouses were in pleasant allocation. He would have 'commodious Courts of Justice.' He was not thinking of such Courts as Sir John Soane's at Westminster. He would have 'public walks, and spacious fields allotted for all gymnics, sports, and honest recreations.' Parks for the people are an invention of the last twenty years. 'I will have conduits of sweet and good water, aptly disposed in each town.' London has hardly ceased to be poisoned by the filth of Water-companies. 'I will have colleges of mathematicians, musicians and actors, physicians, artists, and philosophers, that all arts and sciences may sooner be perfected and better learned.' What has any English Government done for arts and sciences from that hour to this? 'I will provide public schools of all kinds, singing, dancing, fencing, and especially of grammar and languages, not to be taught by those tedious precepts ordinarily used, but by use, example, conversation.' Compared with our population, are we doing much more in the way of Public Schools of all kinds than in the days of Edward VI., when a few grammar-schools were wrung out of the spoils of the Reformation? In the Registrar-General's Report of Marriages, in 1851, it is shown that one man in three, and one woman in two, could not write.

Of property in land Burton has something to say. He would regulate 'what for lords, what for tenants. And because they (the tenants) shall be better encouraged to improve such lands they hold—manure, plant trees, drain, fence—they shall have long leases, a known rent, and known fine, to free them from those intolerable exactions of tyrannizing landlords.' Are these the rules of landlord and tenant at this day? But Democritus is no hater of the great—no leveller. 'Plato's community in many things is impious, absurd, and ridiculous; it takes away

all splendour and magnificence. I will have several orders, degrees of nobility, and those hereditary. But as some dignities shall be hereditary, so some again by election or by gift, besides free offices, pensions, annuities, which, like the golden apple, shall be given to the worthiest and best deserving, both in war and peace.' Let any man who is not a younger son of a patrician house—not the relative of one who keeps the Canvassing Book of a corruptible Borough—let any one who has simply done the State service in a way the State never recognises, the improvement of his age—let him ask for the smallest paring of the golden apple, and see what answer he will get from the Secretary of the Treasury, who has only six letters for the code of his office—b a r t e r.

'My form of government shall be monarchical. Few laws, but those severely kept, plainly put down, and in the mother tongue, that every man may understand.' Legislation has been hard at work, for two centuries, in multiplying statutes that could not be administered, and heaping up enactments that could not be understood. It has been doing a little, too, with Commerce and Taxation, in a way that the plain-thinking John Burton does not recommend: 'Of such wares as are transported or brought in, if they be necessary, commodious, and such as nearly concern man's life, as corn, wood, coal, and such provision as we cannot want, I will have little or no custom paid, no taxes.' England's corn and meat taxes expired only in the last Parliament; and London's coal taxes yet oppress three or four millions, that there may be high festival amongst those who, of all men and all bodies of men, are 'fruges consumere nati.' Democritus would regulate the Church, too. 'No impropriations, no lay patrons of church livings, or one private man; but common societies, corporations, &c., and those rectors of benefices to be chosen out of the Universities, examined and approved as the literati in China.' Look at 'The Clergy List,' for the current year. In some things, however, our author is unreasonable. He says, 'If it were possible, I would have such priests as would imitate

Christ.' He would have, too, 'charitable lawyers that should love their neighbours as themselves.' Nevertheless, he does take a practical view or so of legal affairs. 'Judges and other officers shall be aptly disposed in each province, villages, cities, as common arbitrators to hear causes, and end all controversies.' We have now County Courts; but how were controversies ended twenty years ago? How are they ended now in the Court of the subtlest learning and the best paid wisdom—the High Court of Chancery—to which Burton could not allude when he held, 'No controversy to depend above a year, but without all delays, and further appeals, to be speedily dispatched, and finally concluded in that time allotted?'

Amongst the other paradoxes of Democritus he holds, 'First scholars to take place, then soldiers; for I am of Vegetius his opinion, a scholar deserves better than a soldier; because "*Unius ætatis sunt quæ fortiter fiunt, quæ vero pro utilitate reipublicæ scribuntur, æterna.*"'* The honour-givers of our time know that all such assertions of the rights of literature come from literary men—partial judges of their own case. '*Cedant arma togæ*' is a foolish maxim. Let the fighters get peerages and ribbons—always provided that they beware the pen. There cannot be a greater proof of the superiority of our age to such prejudices as Burton propagated, when he put forth a claim to public reward for the man 'that invents anything for public good in any art or science, or writes a Treatise.'

What a singular notion has Burton of the recreations of the people! 'As all conditions shall be tied to their task, so none shall be over-tired, but have their set times of recreation and holidays—feasts and merry meetings, even to the meanest artificer, or basest servant, once a week to sing or dance, or do whatsoever he shall please. If any be drunk, he shall drink no more wine or strong drink in a twelvemonth after.' Our rule is, that the meanest artificer or basest servant may have a holiday 'once a week.' But

* Those who fight bravely are for an age: those who write for the good of the commonwealth, for all time.

no recreations ; no communing with Heaven in the fields ; no going forth to look at mountains and lakes in cheap boats ; no familiarity with rare animals and plants in choice gardens ; no gazing upon great works of art, in which God speaks as in any other creation, in noble galleries. Nothing but strong drink, in dirty hovels where no sober man comes—drink in abundance once a week, always provided real happiness is not sought after.

‘I will have weights and measures the same throughout.’ How long have we had this uniformity? ‘For defensive wars, I will have forces ready at a small warning, by land and sea.’ The theory is questioned. ‘I will have no multiplicity of offices, of supplying by deputies.’ It is not centuries ago since ‘the king’s turnspit was a member of Parliament.’* It is not twenty years since the Six Clerks and the Sixty Clerks were abolished, with pensions enough to furnish endowments for the education of all the couples that in 1851 made their marks in the Parish Registers.

The poetical Commonwealth of Democritus junior is based upon his previous estimate of the madness of his generation. We have given a few sentences of his about legal improvements. He is rabid about lawyers—‘gowned vultures,’ as he calls them. But how truly he describes some evils that still exist amongst us, and which we still bear patiently! ‘Our forefathers, as a worthy Chorographer of ours observes,† had wont, with a few golden crosses, and lines in verse, make all conveyances, assurances. And such was the candour and integrity of succeeding ages, that a deed, as I have oft seen, to convey a whole manor, was *implicité* contained in some twenty lines, or thereabouts. But now many skins of parchment must scarce serve turn. He that buys and sells a house must have a house full of writings.’ And then come ‘contention and confusion ;’ and men go to law ; and ‘I know not how many years before the cause is heard, and

* Burke’s speech on Economical Reform.

† Camden.

when 'tis judged and determined, by reason of some tricks and errors it is as fresh to begin, after twice seven years, sometimes, as it was at first.' Who shall say that this is obsolete?

He is not very tolerant, either, towards his own profession. 'So many professed Christians, yet so few imitators of Christ—so many preachers, so little practice; such variety of sects, such have and hold of all sides—such absurd and ridiculous traditions and ceremonies. * * * On the adverse side, nice and curious schismatics, in another extreme, abhorring all ceremonies.' Others, 'Formalists, out of fear and base flattery, like so many weathercocks turn round, a rout of temporisers, ready to embrace and maintain all that is or shall be proposed, in hope of preferment.'

He is no flatterer, either, of those who sit in high places: 'A poor sheep-stealer is hanged for stealing of victuals, compelled peradventure by necessity of that intolerable cold, hunger, and thirst, to save himself from starving: but a great man in office may securely rob whole provinces, undo thousands, pill and poll, oppress *ad libitum*, flea, grind, tyrannise, enrich himself by spoils of the Commons, be uncontrollable in his actions, and, after all, be recompensed with turgent titles, honoured for his good service, and no man dare find fault or mutter at it.'

The philosophers and scholars—'men above men, minions of the Muses'—fare little better. 'They that teach wisdom, patience, meekness, are the veriest dizzards, hairbrains, and most discontent.' 'A good orator is a mere voice; his tongue is set to sale.' 'Poets are mad; a company of bitter satirists, detractors, or else parasitical applauders.' 'Your supercilious critics, grammatical triflers, note-makers, curious antiquaries, find out all the ruins of wit, *ineptiarum delicias*, amongst the rubbish of old writers; make books dear, themselves ridiculous, and do nobody good; yet if any man dare oppose or contradict, they are mad, up in arms on a sudden—how many sheets are written in defence, how bitter invectives, what apologies!' I could almost

fancy the old satirist was pointing at Shakspeare commentators.

Burton lived before newspapers, and yet he had a very competent knowledge of what was going on in the world. I will conclude with a curious passage, which might, with few exceptions, have been written by one of our age of electric telegraphs: 'Though I still live a collegiate student, as Democritus in his garden, and lead a monastic life, secluded from those tumults and troubles of the world, in some high place above you all, as he said,—I hear and see what is done abroad,—how others run, ride, turmoil, and macerate themselves in court and country,—a mere spectator of other men's fortunes and adventures, and how they act their parts, which methinks are diversely presented to me, as from a common theatre or scene. I hear new news every day, and those ordinary rumours of war, plagues, fires, inundations, thefts, murders, massacres, meteors, comets, spectrums, prodigies, apparitions;—of towns taken, cities besieged, daily musters and preparations, and such like, which these tempestuous times afford: battles fought, so many slain, monomachies, shipwrecks, piracies and sea-fights, peace, leagues, stratagems, and fresh alarums. A vast confusion of vows, wishes, actions, edicts, petitions, law-suits, pleas, laws, proclamations, complaints, grievances, are daily brought to our ears. New books every day, pamphlets, currantoes, stories, whole catalogues of volumes of all sorts, new paradoxes, opinions, schisms, heresies, controversies in philosophy, religion, &c. Now come tidings of weddings, maskings, mummeries, entertainments, jubilees, embassies, tilts and tournaments, trophies, triumphs, revels, sports, plays. Then again, as in a new shifted scene, treasons, cheating tricks, robberies, enormous villainies in all kinds, funerals, burials, death of princes, new discoveries, expeditions; now comical, then tragical matters. To-day we hear of new lords and offices created, to-morrow of some great men deposed, and then again of fresh honours conferred; one is let loose, another imprisoned; one purchaseth, another breaketh; he thrives,

his neighbour turns bankrupt; now plenty, then again dearth and famine; one runs, another rides, wrangles, laughs, weeps, &c. Thus I daily hear, and such like, both private and public news, amidst the gallantry and misery of the world; jollity, pride, perplexities and cares, simplicity and villainy, subtlety, knavery, candour, and integrity, mutually mixed and offering themselves.'

Who, at first sight, would imagine that this was written—Once upon a Time—in the seventeenth century?

' The world pursues the very track
Which it pursued at its creation;
And mortals shrink in horror back
From any hint of innovation:
From year to year the children do
Exactly what their sires have done;
Time is! Time was! there 's nothing new,
'There 's nothing new beneath the sun.' *

* W. M. Praed: Brazen Head,



MILTON, THE LONDONER.

THE best successor of Milton has described the character of the great poet's mind in one celebrated line :—

‘Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart.’

It might at first seem, looking at the accuracy of this forcible image, that the name of Milton could not be properly associated with the state of society during the times in which he flourished. It is true that in the writings of Milton we have very few glimpses of the familiar life of his day; no set descriptions of scenes and characters; nothing that approaches in the slightest degree to the nature of anecdote; no playfulness, no humour. Wordsworth continues his apostrophe :—

‘Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea.’

The sprightlier dramatists have the voices of

‘Shallow rivers, by whose falls
- Melodious birds sing madrigals.’

It is pleasant to sit in the sunshine and listen to the bubbling of the runnel over its pebbly bottom: but the times of Milton were for the most part dark and stormy, and with them the voice of the sea was in harmony. We can learn, while listening to that voice, when there was calm and when there was tempest. But Milton was not only the great literary name of his period—he was a public man, living in the heart of the mightiest struggle betwixt two adverse principles that England ever encountered. Add to this he was essentially a Londoner. He was born in Bread Street; he died in Cripplegate. During a long life we may trace him, from St. Paul's School, through a succession of London residences which, taking their names with their ordinary associations, sound as little poetical as can well be imagined—St. Bride's Churchyard, Aldersgate Street, Barbican, Holborn, Petty France, Bartholomew Close, Jewin Street, Bunhill Fields. The houses which he inhabited have been swept away; their pleasant gardens are built over. But the name of Milton is inseparably connected with these prosaic realities. That name belongs especially to London.

The Milton of nineteen has himself left us a picture of his mind at this period. His first Latin elegy, addressed to Charles Deodati, is supposed by Warton to have been written about 1627. The writer was born in 1608. We shall transcribe a few passages from Cowper's translation of this elegy:—

‘I well content, where Thames with influent tide
My native city laves, meantime reside:
Nor zeal nor duty now my steps impel
To reedy Cam, and my forbidden cell;
Nor aught of pleasure in those fields have I,
That, to the musing bard, all shade deny.
'T is time that I a pedant's threats disdain,
And fly from wrongs my soul will ne'er sustain.
If peaceful days in letter'd leisure spent,
Beneath my father's roof, be banishment,

Then call me banish'd ; I will ne'er refuse
 A name expressive of the lot I choose.
 I would that, exiled to the Pontic shore,
 Rome's hapless bard had suffered nothing more ;
 He then had equall'd even Homer's lays,
 And, Virgil ! thou hadst won but second praise.
 For here I woo the Muse, with no control ;
 For here my books—my life—absorb me whole.'

His father's roof was in Bread Street, in the parish of All-hallows. The sign of the Spread Eagle, which hung over his father's door, was the armorial bearing of his family ; but the sign indicated that the house was one of business, and the business of Milton's father was that of a scrivener. Here, in some retired back room, looking most probably into a pleasant little garden, was the youthful poet surrounded by his books, perfectly indifferent to the more profitable writing of bonds and agreements that was going forward in his father's office. It was Milton's happiness to possess a father who understood the genius of his son, and whose tastes were in unison with his own. In the young poet's beautiful verses, *Ad Patrem*, also translated by Cowper, he says,—

' ——— thou never bad'st me tread
 The beaten path, and broad, that leads right on
 To opulence, nor didst condemn thy son
 To the insipid clamours of the bar,
 The laws voluminous, and ill observ'd.'

Of Milton's father, Aubrey says, 'He was an ingenious man, delighted in music, and composed many songs now in print, especially that of Oriana.' The poet thus addresses his father in reference to the same accomplishment :—

' ——— thyself
 Art skilful to associate verse with airs
 Harmonious, and to give the human voice
 A thousand modulations, heir by right
 Indisputable of Arion's fame.
 Now say, what wonder is it, if a son
 Of thine delight in verse ; if, so conjoin'd
 In close affinity, we sympathise
 In social arts and kindred studies sweet ?'

There was poetry then, and poetical associations, within Milton's home in the close city. Nor were poetical influences wanting without. The early writings of Milton teem with the romantic associations of his youth, and they have the character of the age sensibly impressed upon them. In the epistle to Deodati we have an ample description of that love of the drama, whether comedy or tragedy, which he subsequently connected with the pursuits of his mirthful and his contemplative man. To the student of nineteen,

‘The grave or gay colloquial scene recruits
My spirits spent in learning's long pursuits.’

His descriptions of the comic characters in which he delights appear rather to be drawn from Terence than from Jonson or Fletcher. But in tragedy he pretty clearly points at Shakspeare's ‘Romeo’ and at ‘Hamlet.’ ‘L'Allegro’ and ‘Il Penseroso’ were probably written some four or five years after this epistle, when Milton's father had retired to Horton, and his son's visits to London were occasional. But ‘the well-trod stage’ is still present to his thoughts. There is a remarkable peculiarity in all Milton's early poetry which is an example of the impressibility of his imagination under local circumstances. He is the poet, at one and the same time, of the city and of the country. In the epistle to Deodati he displays this mixed affection for the poetical of art and of nature :—

‘Nor always city-pent, or pent at home,
I dwell; but, when spring calls me forth to roam,
Expatiate in our proud suburban shades
Of branching elm, that never sun pervades.’

But London is thus addressed :—

‘Oh city, founded by Dardanian hands,
Whose towering front the circling realms commands,
Too blest abode! no loveliness we see
In all the earth, but it abounds in thee.’

Every reader is familiar with the exquisite rural pictures of ‘L'Allegro;’ but the scenery, without the slightest

difficulty, may be placed in the immediate 'suburban shades' which he has described in the epistle. It is scarcely necessary to remove them even as far as the valley of the Colne. The transition is immediate from the hedge-row elms, the russet lawns, the upland hamlets, and the nut-brown ale, to

'Tower'd cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit, or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp and feast and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry,—
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer-eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,' &c.

So, in 'Il Penseroso,' there is a similar transition from the eyensong of the nightingale, and the sullen roar of the far-off curfew, to

'The bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.'

And there, in like manner, we turn from

'Arched walks of twilight groves
And shadows brown,'

to

'—— the high embowed roof
With antic pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.'

'No man,' says Thomas Warton, 'was ever so disqualified to turn Puritan as Milton.' In these his early poems, according to this elegant critic, his expressed love of choral church music, of Gothic cloisters, of the painted windows

and vaulted aisles of a venerable cathedral, of tilts and tournaments, of masques and pageantries, is wholly repugnant to the anti-poetical principles which he afterwards adopted. We doubt exceedingly whether Milton can be held to have turned Puritan to the extent in which Warton accepts the term. Milton was a republican in politics, and an assertor of liberty of conscience, independent of Church government, in religion. But the constitution of his mind was utterly opposed to the reception of such extreme notions of formal fitness as determined the character of a Puritan. There has been something of exaggeration and mistake in this matter. For example: Warton, in a note on that passage in the epistle to Deodati in which Milton is supposed to allude to Shakspeare's tragedies, says, 'His warmest poetical predilections were at last totally obliterated by civil and religious enthusiasm. Seduced by the gentle eloquence of fanaticism, he listened no longer to the "wild and native wood-notes of Fancy's sweetest child." In his "Iconoclastes" he censures King Charles for studying "one, whom we well know was the closet-companion of his solitudes, William Shakspeare." This remonstrance, which not only resulted from his abhorrence of a king, but from his disapprobation of plays, would have come with propriety from Prynne or Hugh Peters. Nor did he now perceive that what was here spoken in contempt conferred the highest compliment on the elegance of Charles's private character.' Mr. Waldron had the merit of pointing out, some fifty years ago, that the passage in the 'Iconoclastes' to which Warton alludes gives not the slightest evidence of Milton's listening no longer to 'Fancy's sweetest child,' nor of reproaching Charles for having made Shakspeare the 'closet-companion of his solitudes.' Milton is arguing—with the want of charity certainly which belongs to an advocate—that 'the deepest policy of a tyrant hath been ever to counterfeit religious;' and, applying this to the devotion of the 'Icon Basilike,' he thus proceeds:—'The poets also, and some English, have been in this point so mindful of decorum as to put never more pious words in

the mouth of any person than of a tyrant. I shall not instance an abstruse author, wherein the King may be less conversant, but one whom we well know was the closet-companion of his solitudes, William Shakespeare, who introduces the person of Richard III. speaking in as high a strain of piety and mortification as is uttered in any passage in this book' (the 'Icon Basilike'). He then quotes a speech of Shakspeare's Richard III., and adds, 'The poet used not much licence in departing from the truth of history.' If Milton had meant to reproach Charles with being familiar with Shakspeare, the reproach would have recoiled upon himself, in evidencing the same familiarity. There was, in truth, scarcely a greater disparity between the clustering locks of Milton and the cropped hair of the Roundheads, than between his abiding love of poetry and music and the frantic denunciations of both by such as Prynne. Prynne, for example, devotes a whole chapter of the 'Histriomastix' to a declamation against 'effeminate, delicate, lust-provoking music,' in which the mildest thing he quotes from the Fathers is, 'Let the singer be thrust out of thy house as noxious; expel out of thy doors all fiddlers, singing-women, with all this choir of the devil, as the deadly songs of syrens.' Compare this with Milton's sonnet, published in 1648, 'To my Friend, Mr. Henry Lawes,'—the royalist Henry Lawes:—

'Harry, whose tuneful and well-measur'd song
First taught our English music how to span
Words with just note and accent, not to scan
With Midas' ears, committing short and long;
Thy worth and skill exempt thee from the throng,
With praise enough for envy to look wan;
To after age thou shalt be writ the man
That with smooth air couldst humour best our tongue.'

Doubtless since 'Comus' was presented at Ludlow Castle in 1634, and Lawes composed and sung some of its lyrics, up to the period when Milton wrote the 'Iconoclastes,' the elegancies, the splendours, the high triumphs, the antique pageantries, which so captivated the youthful

poet, had given place to sterner things. In his own mind, especially, that process of deep reflection was going forward which finally made him a zealous partisan and a bitter controversialist; but which was blended with purer and loftier aspirations than usually belong to politics or polemics. But his was an age of deep thinkers and resolute actors. The leaders and the followers then of either party were sincere in their thoughts and earnest in their deeds. They were not a compromising and evasive generation. There was no mistaking their friendships or their enmities. Milton early chose his part in the great contention of his times. Amidst the classical imagery of Lycidas we have his bitter denunciations against the hirelings of the Church, who—

‘Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold.’

He would not enter the service of that Church himself lest he should be called upon to ‘subscribe slave.’ To that vocation, however, he says, ‘I was destined of a child and in mine own resolutions.’ That he was impatient of what he considered the ty-



ranny which interfered between a service so suited to his character was to be expected from the ardour of his nature ; but we can scarcely think that in those lines of Lycidas, written in 1637—

‘ But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more ’—

he anticipates, as some have maintained, the execution of Archbishop Laud. Matters were scarcely then come to that pass. But yet Laud in 1637 had some unpleasant demonstrations of the temper of the times. In that year Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne were sentenced by the Star Chamber, ‘ That each of the defendants should be fined five thousand pounds ; that Bastwick and Burton should stand in the pillory at Westminster, and there lose their ears ; and that Prynne, having lost his ears before by sentence of this court, should have the remainder of his ears cut off, and should be branded on both cheeks with the letters S. L., to signify a seditious libeller.’ The execution to the tittle of this barbarous sentence maddened and disgusted those who looked upon the spectacle. Laud’s Diary, for two months after this revolting exhibition, contains some very significant entries, recording the libels which it produced. A short libel pasted on the cross in Cheapside described him as the arch-wolf of Canterbury ; another, on the south gate of St. Paul’s, informed the people that the devil had let that house to the Archbishop ; another, fastened to the north gate, averred that the government of the Church of England is a candle in the snuff going out in a stench. These were warnings ; but power is apt to look upon its own pomp, and forget that the day of humiliation and weakness may arise. Howell, in one of his letters written in the year of Laud’s execution, says, ‘ Who would have dreamt ten years since, when Archbishop Laud did ride in state through London streets, accompanying my Lord of London, to be sworn Lord High Treasurer of England, that the mitre should have now come to such a scorn, to such a national kind of hatred ?’ In those eventful days such

contrasts were not unfrequent; and they sometimes followed each other much more closely than the triumphal procession of Laud, and his execution. On the 25th of November, 1641, the city of London welcomed Charles from Scotland with an entertainment of unusual magnificence; and the historian of the city, after revelling in his description of aldermen and liverymen, to the number of five hundred, mounted on horseback, with all the array of velvet and scarlet and golden chains,—of conduits running with claret, —of banquetings and loyal anthems, says, ‘The whole day seemed to be spent in a kind of emulation, with reverence be it spoken, between their Majesties and the City; the citizens blessing and praying for their Majesties and their princely issue, and their Majesties returning the same blessings upon the heads of the citizens.’ In 1642, not quite a year after these pleasant gratulations, Milton wrote the following noble sonnet:—

‘WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY.

‘Captain, or Colonel, or Knight in arms,
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
If deed of honour did thee ever please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee, for he knows the charms
That call fame on such gentle acts as these.
And he can spread thy name o’er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun’s bright circle warms.
Lift not thy spear against the Muses’ bow’r:
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tow’r
Went to the ground: and the repeated air
Of sad Electra’s poet had the pow’r
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.’

On the 25th of August, 1642, the King erected his standard on Nottingham Castle. Essex, as Generalissimo of the Parliament forces, had already marched upon Northampton. The King’s army was advancing towards the capital; and London, with its vast suburbs, required to be put in a state of defence. It was on this occasion that

the dogged resolution, the unflinching courage of the citizens of all ranks and all ages, manifested themselves in their willing labours to give London in some degree the character of a fortified city. The royalists ridiculed the citizens in their song of 'Roundheaded cuckolds, come dig.' The battle of Edgehill was fought on the 23rd of October; and on the 7th of November Essex returned to London. While the Parliament was negotiating, the sound of Prince Rupert's cannon was heard in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital; and the citizens marched out to battle. But the bloody contest of Edgehill was not to be renewed at Brentford and Turnham Green. The King's forces retired; and the trained-bands refreshed themselves and made merry with the good things which their careful wives had not forgotten to send after them in this hour of danger and alarm. It was upon this occasion that the sonnet which we have just transcribed was written. We might infer from the tone of this sonnet that Milton had little confidence that the arms of the citizens would be a sufficient protection for his 'defenceless doors.' He was living then in Aldersgate Street; in that sort of house which was common in Old London, and which Milton always chose—a garden-house. This house might unquestionably be called 'the Muses' bower;' for here he was not only carrying on the education of his nephews and of the sons of a few intimate friends, but, as we learn from 'The Reason of Church Government,' he was preparing for some high work which should be of power 'to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility; to allay the perturbation of the mind, and set the affections in right tune—* * * a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained by the invocation of dame Memory and her syren daughters; but, by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of

whom he pleases.' Cherishing high thoughts such as these, Milton called upon the assaulting soldier,

'Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bow'r.'

Since his return from Italy, in 1639, his principles had been too openly proclaimed for him to appeal to

'Captain, or Colonel, or Knight in arms,'

to spare the house of Milton the polemic. It was Milton the poet who left unwillingly 'a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes,' that thus asked that the Muses' bower should be protected, 'as the house of Pindar and the city of Euripides had been spared. But London was saved from the assault; and a few months after the Common Council and the Parliament raised up much more formidable defences than invocations founded upon classical lore. All the passages and ways leading to the city were shut up, except those entering at Charing Cross, St. Giles's in the Fields, St. John Street, Shoreditch, and Whitechapel. The ends of these streets were fortified with breastworks and turnpikes, musket proof; the city wall was repaired and mounted with artillery; finally an earthen rampart, with bastions, and redoubts, and all the other systematic defences of a beleaguered city, was carried entirely round London, Westminster, and Southwark.

In 1643 Milton married. Aubrey's account of this marriage and the subsequent separation is given with his characteristic quaintness:—'His first wife (Mrs. Powell, a Royalist) was brought up and lived where there was a great deal of company and merriment, dancing, &c.: and when she came to live with her husband at Mr. Russel's, in St. Bride's Churchyard, she found it very solitary; no company came to her, oftentimes heard his nephews beaten and cry. This life was irksome to her, so she went to her parents at Forest Hill. He sent for her (after some time), and I think his servant was evilly entreated; but as for wronging his bed, I never heard the least suspicion, nor

had he of that jealousy.' In another place he says, 'She was a zealous Royalist, and went without her husband's consent to her mother in the King's quarters near Oxford: two opinions do not well on the same bolster.' Philips, Milton's relation, gives pretty much the same account of the matter. That such cases were not uncommon in an age distracted by controversial opinions in religion and politics may readily be imagined. The general argument of Milton's elaborate treatises on divorce is, that disagreements in temper and disposition, which tend to produce indifference or dislike, are sufficient to set aside the bond of marriage. The company and merriment, dancing, &c., in the midst of which Milton's wife was brought up, were inconsistent with his notions of pleasure and propriety. Aubrey tells us, 'he was of a very cheerful humour. He would be cheerful even in his gout-fits, and sing.' In his sonnet to Lawrence, written most probably when he was fifty, the same cheerfulness prevails:—

'What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?'

Again, in his sonnet to Cyriack Skinner:

'To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
In mirth, that after no repenting draws.'

He adds, mild Heaven

'——— disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And when God sends a cheerful hour refrains.'

This was not Puritanism; but neither was it the tumultuous merriment nor the secret licentiousness of the Cavaliers. The example of Milton may instruct us that the society of London was not to be wholly divided into these extreme classes. His plan of an academy, which Johnson calls impracticable, was founded, we have little doubt, upon a careful consideration of the desires and capacities of the

intellectual class amongst whom he lived. There were other Englishmen in those days than fanatics and reprobrates. He has eloquently described, in 'The Liberty of unlicensed Printing,' the thirst for knowledge, the ardent desire for truth, which prevailed in London even amidst the disorders of contending factions, the din of warfare, and the going forth of its sons and husbands to battle in a great cause:—'Behold now this vast city, a city of refuge, the mansion-house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with his (God's) protections. The shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching reformation: others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement. What could a man require more from a nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge?' Yet in the same wonderful composition he tells us plainly enough, and without any severity of rebuke, that London had its recreations and its lighter thoughts, amidst this 'diligent alacrity in the pursuance of truth;' and that there were temptations which were only innocuous upon his principle, that 'he that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian.' The following graphic description of some of the social aspects of London is a remarkable exception to Milton's usual style of writing: and it almost tempts us to withdraw the remarks with which we introduced this paper, in which we spoke too slightly of Milton's power as a painter of manners:—'If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we must regulate all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No music must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and Doric. There must be licensing dancers, that no gesture, motion,

or deportment be taught our youth, but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such Plato was provided of. It will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, the violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what to say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers? The windows also, and balconies, must be thought on; there are shrewd books, with dangerous frontispieces, set to sale; who shall prohibit them?—shall twenty licensers? The villages also must have their visitors, to inquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebeck reads, even to the ballatry and the gammut of every municipal fiddler; for these are the countryman's Arcadias, and his Monte Mayors. Next, what more national corruption, for which England hears ill abroad, than household gluttony? who shall be the rector of our daily rioting? and what shall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent those houses where drunkenness is sold and harboured? Our garments also should be referred to the licensing of some sober workmasters, to see them cut into a less wanton garb. Who shall regulate all the mixed conversation of our youth, male and female together, as is the fashion of this country? Who shall still appoint what shall be discoursed, what presumed, and no farther? Lastly, who shall forbid and separate all idle resort, all evil company? These things will be, and must be; but how they shall be least hurtful, how least enticeing, herein consists the grave and governing wisdom of a state. To sequester out of the world into Atlantis and Utopian politics, which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evil, in the midst whereof God hath placed us unavoidably.'

Milton's reconciliation with his wife took place, it is recorded, in the house of a relation in St. Martin's-le-Grand. Committed as he was by his opinions on the general subject of divorce, he perhaps considered it fortunate that circumstances had prevented him acting upon them. He probably,

had this trial been reserved to him, would have been an evidence of the hollowness of his own arguments. As it was, we hear no subsequent complaints; and his house afforded his wife's family a shelter when the advocates of the Royalist cause were exposed to persecution. It was in Barbican that Milton lived after his wife returned to him.

May I be pardoned for inserting a little poem which belongs to this domestic history:—

ELLEN AND MARY.

THE street-door is ajar, and Ellen enters.
 She pauses in the empty hall, for sounds
 Come, from the right, of music—soft, low sounds
 Of one preluding on the organ, rapt
 Into an ecstasy at his own touch.
 She pauses still; for, on the left, she hears
 A querulous voice, and then a long-drawn sigh:
 She opens the left-hand door—Mary sits weeping.
 ‘Yes, Ellen, I am wretched—I, the bride
 Two little months ago, am very wretched.
 I am a lonely woman: in the morning
 He drudges with his boys; then comes the dinner—
 A short, sad meal; and then—hear you that organ?—
 I hate those notes he calls “a winding bout
 Of linked sweetness.” Then, at eventide,
 He reads aloud some dismal tragedy,
 Or puritanic sermon. I’m weary on’t.’
 ‘Mary, I grieve for you; but not because
 Of what you think your loneliness. Believe me,
 There’s something heavier than a weary hour—
 Heavier to bear in this new life of yours.
 Forgive me, if I say the fault is one
 That oft besets our sex—we seek delights
 When man asks only sympathy. Knew you not
 What manner of mind was his?—what earnestness?
 Deep contemplation—proud and resolute will—
 A poet’s tenderness, but yet withal
 The heroic heart, to do and suffer all things
 For duty? Mary, you must mould your spirit
 To his more lofty nature. Did he win you
 By common blandishments—by bows and smiles?—
 Talk’d he as Charles’s cavaliers would talk,
 When they danc’d at Forest-hill?’

‘ I thought him beautiful—
 I knew him wise ; he held my soul subdued
 To his most absolute power. I loved and trembled—
 And yet I loved. I was a giddy girl,
 Brought up in country pleasures. My heart yearns
 For the old revelries. And, then, I dread
 To listen to his talk, of kings discrown’d
 For their misdoings, and of mitred bishops
 Thrust from the altar. He is very stern.
 Would I had never left my father’s house !’

‘ Your father’s house was a strange house for him
 To find a wife in—so short a courtship, too !
 But now your Husband’s party must be yours,
 And not your father’s. ’T is an evil time—
 Friend against friend, and brother against brother.’

‘ My brothers are with the king ; they draw the swords
 Of loyal subjects. My Husband does not fight,
 Save with the pen ; but he writes bitter words—
 Foul, rebel words, they say. I cannot read them :
 I will not listen when he eagerly paces
 The garden up and down, declaiming loud
 His eloquent sentences, of Liberty,
 And private Judgment—and I know not what.
 Would I had never left my father’s house !’

A year has gone since Mary was a bride.
 She sits at her father’s hearth. The autumn flowers
 Have perish’d at Forest-hill, and now the earliest
 Are blooming there. Mary has gather’d both—
 Fled from her Husband. A false cheerfulness
 Flickers about her face ; there is no radiance
 Of inward peace now beaming from her eyes.
 Ofttimes is gaiety within that house :
 Lovelocks are floating in the midnight dance ;
 Cups are there drain’d, with tipsy shouts of joy
 At rumours of success, and threats of vengeance
 Pour’d forth with curses, as some news is heard
 Of rebel daring. The king’s quarters are nigh,
 Some five miles off, at Oxford. Volunteers,
 And plumed ensigns, reckless, fiery spirits,
 Hover round Mary. There are sometimes sneers
 Whisper’d, not very low, at widow’d wives ;
 And some would think that freedoms might be safe.
 But Mary keeps her innocence : the mind
 Undisciplin’d and weak, is gathering strength.
 At first she never uses her Husband’s name :

She is plain Mary. Now and then she hears
 Men speak that name in hatred; but they speak
 With fear, too, of his might. There comes one thither
 Who loved him once; they parted in deep anger;
 Milton and Cleveland went their several ways.
 But Cleveland speaks no bitter word to Mary
 Of that old College friend. He has within him
 The poet's yearnings; and the nobleness
 With which a poet bows before the genius
 Even of a rival and an enemy.
 Though wassail, and the license of the camp,
 Made him a scorner and a ballad-monger,
 He scorn'd not him who wrote that lofty book
 The 'Areopagitica.' Mary hears
 From him some gentle memories of the man
 Whose soul had awed her. Then remorse creeps in;
 And she daily weeps to think what cold replies
 Her stubbornness had given his mild requests,
 And then his brief commands, for her return.

The summer comes. Fear is within that house
 Where late was revelry—galliards and country-rounds,
 And moonlit madrigals on dewy lawns.
 Fear now abides there, for the news has reach'd
 Of Naseby field. Ruin is drawing near.
 The sequestrators come; and Mary's father
 Hurries to London.

Ellen is sitting in her father's house—
 A garden-house, in the City. She is reading.
 A grave and learned book is on her knee—
 'The Doctrine and the Discipline of Divorce.'
 'Down, idle fancies! Perish, wicked thoughts!
 Thou great logician, thou hast steep'd thy argument
 In the deep dye of thy hopes. I could hope, too;
 But I will strive against temptation. Lord,
 Forgive my erring and tumultuous thoughts!
 It cannot be—it is not true—that difference
 Of temper—incompatibility—make
 A cause of final separation. Yet
 How hard it is! ——
 It is not just; for what a crowd would rush,
 Upon that plea, to sever household ties,
 Play false with oaths ——'

Mary is on the threshold.
 Another minute, and she bathes the cheek
 Of Ellen with hot tears.

‘I knew him not—
 Knew not his greatness—nor his gentleness.
 I wrong’d him, Ellen; yet he hath redeem’d
 My father from deep ruin. Will he spurn me?
 Yes, he will spurn me. Ellen, I would ask
 Forgiveness, and then die.’

The book is shut.

Another morn, and Mary’s Husband comes
 At Ellen’s bidding. There is mystery.
 A sob—and then a silence—then a rush.
 Mary is kneeling at her Husband’s feet,
 And Ellen joins their hands.

In 1647 Milton had again moved to a small house in Holborn, which opened behind into Lincoln’s Inn Fields. He here continued to work in the education of a few scholars:—

‘So didst thou travel on life’s common way
 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.’

But within two years Milton was called to higher occupation. In the Council-books at the State Paper Office, some extracts from which were first published in the preface to Dr. Sumner’s translation of Milton’s ‘*De Doctrina Christiana*,’ there is this entry, under date of November 12, 1649: ‘Ordered that Sir John Hippesley is spoken to that Mr. Milton may be accommodated with the lodgings that he hath at Whitehall.’ And on the following 19th of November:—‘That Mr. Milton shall have the lodgings that were in the hands of Sir John Hippesley in Whitehall, for his accommodation, as being secretary to the Council for Foreign Languages.’ Here, then, was Milton, after having written the ‘*Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*,’ and the ‘*Iconoclastes*,’ fixed upon the very spot where, according to his own account, a ‘most potent King, after he had trampled upon the laws of the nation, was finally, by the supreme council of the kingdom, condemned to die, and beheaded before the very gate of the royal palace;’* but where, according to those who took a different view of the

* *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*.

matter, a 'black tragedy was acted, which filled most hearts among us with consternation and horror.'* After the sword was drawn and the scabbard thrown away, the Whitehall which Milton must have had in his mind when he wrote of

‘ Throngs of knights and barons bold
In weeds of peace,’

was deserted; its courts were solitary, its chambers were vacant; their hangings rotted on the walls; their noble pictures were covered with dust and cobweb. Howell tells a remarkable story about the desolation of the favourite palace of James and Charles:—‘I send you these following prophetic verses of Whitehall, which were made above twenty years ago to my knowledge, upon a book called “Balaam’s Ass,” that consisted of some invectives against King James and the court *in statu quo tunc*. It was composed by one Mr. Williams, a counsellor of the Temple, but a Roman Catholic, who was hanged, drawn, and quartered at Charing Cross for it; and I believe there be hundreds that have copies of these verses ever since that time about the town yet living. They were these:—

“ Some seven years since Christ rid to court,
And there he left his ass,
The courtiers kick’d him out of doors,
Because they had no grass:
The ass went mourning up and down,
And thus I heard him bray,—
If that they could not give me grass,
They might have given me hay:
But sixteen hundred forty-three,
Whosoe’er shall see that day,
Will nothing find within that court
But only grass and hay.”

Which was found to happen true in Whitehall, till the soldiers coming to quarter there trampled it down.’

Milton was settled in Whitehall little more than two years. Within six months of his establishment there he received from the Council a warrant to the trustees and

* Howell’s Letters.

contractors for the sale of the King's goods, to deliver to him such hangings as should be sufficient for the furnishing of his lodgings. In 1651 the Council and the Committee of Parliament for Whitehall were at issue with regard to Milton's remaining in these lodgings; and the Council appointed a Committee to endeavour with the Committee of Parliament, 'that the said Mr. Milton may be continued where he is, in regard of the employment he is in to the Council, which necessitates him to reside near the Council.' But he left these lodgings. From 1652, till within a few weeks of the restoration of Charles II. in 1660, he resided in Petty France, Westminster, in the house 'next door to the Lord Scudamore's, and opening into St. James's Park.' He held the office of Foreign Secretary till 1655. In April the 17th of that year the following entry is found in the Council-books:—'Ordered that the former yearly salary of Mr. John Milton, of two hundred and eighty-eight pounds, &c., formerly charged on the Council's contingencies, be reduced to one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, and paid to him during his life out of his Highness's Exchequer.' This reduced payment was no doubt a retiring pension to Milton; and the reasons for that retirement are sufficiently pointed out in his second sonnet to Skinner, written in 1655:—

'Cyriack, this three years day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heav'n's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask,
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.'

The European fame of the author of the 'Defensio pro Populo Anglicano' was not overstated by the poet.

Aubrey says, 'He was mightily importuned to go into France and Italy; foreigners came much to see him and much admired him, and offered to him great preferments to come over to them; and the only inducement of several foreigners that came over into England was chiefly to see O. Protector and Mr. J. Milton; and would see the house and chamber where he was born. He was much more admired abroad than at home.' Milton must indeed have felt that, during the four or five years in which he communicated to foreign nations, in his own powerful and majestic style, the wishes and opinions of a strong and resolved government, he was filling a part which, however obnoxious might be his principles, could not forbear to command the respect of the highest-minded men of all countries. As Milton continued to reside in Westminster for several years after he had been compelled by blindness to resign his office, there is little doubt that his intimacy was close and confidential, not only with his own immediate friends, Marvell, and Skinner, and Harrington, who according to Anthony Wood belonged with him to the political club which met at the Turk's Head in Palace Yard—but with the more powerful leaders in the Commonwealth, and with 'Cromwell, our chief of men.' The celebrity of the Rota Club gave rise probably to the assertion that 'Milton and some other creatures of the Commonwealth had instituted the Calves' Head Club,'* which met on the 30th of January to revile the memory of Charles I. by profane ribaldry and mock solemnities. Milton, however stern a controversialist, was of too lofty a nature to stoop to such things. Pepys, in his Diary of January 1660, gives us a pretty adequate notion of the nature of the proceedings at this political club, the Rota, of which Harrington was the founder:—'I went to the Coffee Club, and heard very good discourse; it was in answer to Mr. Harrington's answer, who said that the state of the Roman government was not a settled government, and so it was no wonder that the balance of prosperity was in one hand, and the command in

* Secret History of the Calves' Head Club. Harleian Miscellany.

another, it being therefore always in a posture of war: but it was carried by ballot that it was a steady government, though it is true by the voices it had been carried before that it was an unsteady government; so to-morrow it is to be proved by the opponents that the balance lay in one hand and the government in another.' All this, after the real business of the Long Parliament, looks like boys' play; but it was one mode by which the heat of political theorists quietly smouldered away without explosion. Wood says, 'The discourses of the members about government and ordering a commonwealth were the most ingenious and smart that ever were heard; for the arguments in the Parliament House were but flat to them.' Yet these smart and ingenious things told for little when the genius of Cromwell was no more. While Harrington was declaiming, Monk was bringing in Charles II. The Rump Parliament, which had overthrown the feeble government of Richard Cromwell, was very shortly after cast down by the force of popular opinion. In three months after Charles was on the throne; and Milton was proscribed. Up to the last moment he had lifted up his voice against what he called 'the general defection of a misguided and abused multitude.' In the 'Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth' we have almost his last words of solemn exhortation in connection with public affairs:— 'What I have spoken is the language of that which is not called amiss, the good old cause: if it seem strange to any, it will not seem more strange, I hope, than convincing to backsliders: thus much I should perhaps have said, though I were sure I should have spoken only to trees and stones, and had none to cry to but with the prophet, "O earth, earth, earth!" to tell the very soil itself what her perverse inhabitants are deaf to. Nay, though what I have spoke should happen (which Thou suffer not who didst create mankind free! nor Thou next who didst redeem us from being servants of men!) *to be the last words of our expiring liberty.*' This was prophetic. For thirty years no such words were again heard; and in 'Paradise Lost' there is

but one solitary allusion to his position, with reference to public affairs and public manners :—

‘ More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchang’d
To hoarse or mute, though fall’n on evil days,
On evil days though fall’n, and evil tongues ;
In darkness, and with dangers compass’d round,
And solitude ; yet not alone, while thou
Visit’st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
Purples the east : still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drown’d
Both harp and voice ; nor could the muse defend
Her son.’

Milton, upon the Restoration, was in hiding, it is said, at a friend’s house in Bartholomew Close. He was well concealed ; for the proclamation for his apprehension, and that of Goodwin, says, ‘ The said John Milton and John Goodwin are so fled, or so obscure themselves, that no endeavours used for their apprehension can take effect, whereby they may be brought to legal trial, and deservedly receive condign punishment for their treasons and offences.’ Johnson thinks that the escape of Milton was favoured. Unquestionably his judicial murder would have been the most disgraceful act of the restored government. It is said that in 1650 Milton saved the royalist D’Avenant, and that in 1660 D’Avenant saved the republican Milton. Milton’s ‘ Iconoclastes ’ and ‘ Defensio ’ were burnt by the common hangman ; but he was rendered safe by the Act of Indemnity.

We have thus very hastily and imperfectly traced Milton through his public life. In the remaining fourteen years he was perhaps happier than in the confident and cheerful thoughts of his active existence. He was then truly ‘ like a star, and dwelt apart.’ He was wholly devoted to the accomplishment of those great labours which he had

shadowed forth in his youth. He clung to London with an abiding love, and from 1660 to 1665 he lived in Holborn and Jewin Street. During this period he completed 'Paradise Lost.' When the great plague broke out he found a retreat at Chalfont. From this period his abode, up to the time of his death in 1674, was in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields. It was here that Dryden visited him. Aubrey records this visit; and amongst 'his familiar learned acquaintance' mentions 'Jo. Dryden, Esq., Poet Laureat, who very much admired him, and went to him to have leave to put his "*Paradise Lost*" into a drama in rhyme. Mr. Milton received him civilly, and told him he would give him leave to tag his verses.'



Chancel of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

LUCY HUTCHINSON.

THE 'Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson' is a book to be loved. In many passages it is tedious—a record of petty strategies of partisan warfare—and, more dreary still, of factious jealousies and polemical hatreds. The absolute truth of the book is fatal, in one direction, to our hero-worship. The leaders of the Great Rebellion, in such minute details, appear as mere schemers, as rival agents at a borough election; and the most fervent in professions of religious zeal are as bitter in their revenges as the heroes of a hundred scalps. But there arises out of the book, and is evermore associated with it, the calm quiet shadow of a woman of exquisite purity, of wondrous constancy, of untiring affection,—Lucy Hutchinson, its writer.

John Hutchinson is at Richmond, lodging at the house of his music-master. He is twenty-two years of age. The village is full of 'good company,' for the young Princes are being educated in the palace, and many 'ingenious persons entertained themselves at that place.' The music-master's house is the resort of the king's musicians; 'and divers of the gentlemen and ladies that were affected with music came thither to hear.' There was a little girl 'tabled' in the same house with John Hutchinson, who was taking lessons of the lutanist—a charming child, full of vivacity and intelligence. She told John she had an elder sister—a studious and retiring person—who was gone with her mother, Lady Apsley, into Wiltshire—and Lucy was going to be married, she thought. The little girl ever talked of Lucy—and the gentleman talked of Lucy—and one day a song was sung which Lucy had written—and John and

the vivacious child walked, another day, to Lady Apsley's house, and there, in a closet, were Lucy's Latin books. Mr. Hutchinson grew in love with Lucy's image; and when the talk was more rife that she was about to be married—and some said that she was indeed married—he became unhappy—and 'began to believe there was some magic in the place, which enchanted men out of their right senses; but the sick heart could not be chid nor advised into health.' At length Lucy and her mother came home; and Lucy was not married. Then John and Lucy wandered by the pleasant banks of the Thames, in that spring-time of 1638, and a 'mutual friendship' grew up between them. Lucy now talked to him of her early life; how she had been born in the Tower of London, of which her late father, Sir John Apsley, was the governor; how her mother was the benefactress of the prisoners, and delighted to mitigate the hard fortune of the noble and learned, and especially Sir Walter Raleigh, by every needful help to his studies and amusements; how she herself grew serious amongst these scenes, and delighted in nothing but reading, and would never practise her lute or harpsichords, and absolutely hated her needle. John was of a like serious temper. Their fate was determined.

The spring is far advanced into summer. On a certain day, the friends on both sides meet to conclude the terms of the marriage. Lucy is not to be seen. She has taken the small-pox. She is very near death. At length John is permitted to speak to his betrothed. Tremblingly and mournfully she comes into his presence. She is 'the most deformed person that could be seen.' Who could tell the result in words so touching as Lucy's own? 'He was nothing troubled at it, but married her as soon as she was able to quit the chamber, when the priest and all that saw her were affrighted to look on her. But God recompensed his justice and constancy by restoring her; though she was longer than ordinary before she recovered to be as well as before.'

They were married on the 3rd of July, 1638.

In the autumn of 1641, John and Lucy Hutchinson are living in their own house of Owthorpe, in Nottinghamshire. They have two sons. They are 'peaceful and happy.' John has dedicated two years since his marriage to the study of 'school divinity.' He has convinced himself of 'the great point of predestination.' This faith has not, as his wife records, produced a 'carelessness of life in him,' but 'a more strict and holy walking.' He applies himself, in his house at Owthorpe, 'to understand the things then in dispute' between the King and Parliament. He is satisfied of the righteousness of the Parliament's cause; but he then 'contents himself with praying for peace.' In another year the King has set up his standard at Nottingham; the battle of Edgehill has been fought; all hope of peace is at an end. John Hutchinson is forced out of his quiet habitation by the suspicions of his royalist neighbours. He is marked as a Roundhead. Lucy does not like the name. 'It was very ill applied to Mr. Hutchinson, who, having naturally a very fine thickset head of hair, kept it clean and handsome, so that it was a great ornament to him; although the godly of those days, when he embraced their party, would not allow him to be religious because his hair is not in their cut.' The divinity student now becomes a lieutenant-colonel. He raises a company of 'very honest godly men.' The Earl of Chesterfield is plundering the houses of the Puritans in the Vale of Belvoir, near Owthorpe; and the young colonel has apprehensions for the safety of his family. In the depth of winter a troop of horse arrive one night at the lonely house where Lucy and her children abide. They are hastily summoned to prepare for an instant journey. They are to ride to Nottingham before sunrise, for the soldiers are not strong enough to march in the day. Lucy is henceforth to be the companion of her husband in his perilous office—his friend, his comforter—a ministering angel amongst the fierce and dangerous spirits, whom he sways by a remarkable union of courage and gentleness.

Let us look at the shadow of Lucy Hutchinson. She

tranquilly sits in one of the upper chambers of the old and ruinous castle of which her husband is appointed governor. It is a summer evening of 1643. In that tower, built upon the top of the rock, tradition says that Queen Isabel received her paramour Mortimer; and at the base of the rock are still shown Mortimer's Well, and Mortimer's Hole, as Lucy Hutchinson saw them two centuries ago. She looks out of the narrow windows by which her chamber is lighted. There is the Trent, peacefully flowing on one side, amidst flat meadows. On the other is the town of Nottingham. The governor has made the ruinous castle a strong fortress, with which he can defy the Cavaliers should they occupy the town beneath. Opposite the towers is the old church of St. Nicholas, whose steeple commands the platform of the castle. The governor has sent away his horse, and many of his foot, to guard the roads by which the enemy could approach Nottingham. There is no appearance of danger. The reveille is beat. Those who have been watching all night lounge into the town. It is in the possession of the Cavaliers. The scene is changed. The din of ordnance rouses Lucy from her calm gaze upon the windings of the Trent. For five days and nights there is firing without intermission. Within the walls of the castle there are not more than eighty men. The musqueteers on St. Nicholas' steeple pick off the cannoneers at their guns.

Now and then, as the assailants are beaten from the walls, they leave a wounded man behind, and he is dragged into the castle. On the sixth day, after that terrible period of watchfulness, relief arrives. The Cavaliers are driven from the town with much slaughter, and the castle is filled with prisoners. Lucy has not been idle during these six days of peril. There is a task to be performed,—a fitting one for woman's tenderness. Within the castle was a dungeon called the Lions' Den, into which the prisoners were cast; and as they were brought up from the town, two of the fanatical ministers of the garrison reviled and maltreated them. Lucy reads the commands of her Master

after another fashion. As the prisoners are carried bleeding to the Lions' Den, she implores that they should be brought in to her, and she binds up and dresses their wounds. And now the two ministers mutter—and their souls abhor to see this favour done to the enemies of God—and they teach the soldiers to mutter. But Lucy says, 'I have done nothing but my duty. These are our enemies, but they are our fellow-creatures. Am I to be upbraided for these poor humanities?' And then she breathes a thanksgiving to Heaven that her mother had taught her this humble surgery. There is a tear in John's eye as he gazes on this scene. That night the Cavalier officers sup with him, rather as guests than as prisoners.

In the Vale of Belvoir, about seven miles from Belvoir Castle, is the little village of Owthorpe. When Colonel Hutchinson returned to the house of his fathers, after the war was ended, he found it plundered of all its moveables—a mere ruin. In a few years it is a fit dwelling for Lucy to enjoy a life-long rest, after the terrible storms of her early married days. There is no accusing spirit to disturb their repose. John looks back upon that solemn moment when he signed the warrant for the great tragedy enacted before Whitehall without remorse. He had prayed for 'an enlightened conscience,' [and he had carried out his most serious convictions. He took no part in the despotic acts that followed the destruction of the monarchy. He had no affection for the fanatics who held religion to be incompatible with innocent pleasures and tasteful pursuits. At Owthorpe, then, he lived the true life of an English gentleman. He built—he planted—he adorned his house with works of art—he was the just magistrate—the benefactor of the poor. The earnest man who daily expounded the Scriptures to his household was no ascetic. There was hospitality within those walls—with music and revelry. The Puritans looked gloomily and suspiciously upon the dwellers at Owthorpe. The Cavaliers could not forgive

the soldier who had held Nottingham Castle against all assaults.

The Restoration comes. The royalist connexions of Lucy Hutchinson have a long struggle to save her husband's life; but he is finally included in the Act of Oblivion. He is once more at Owthorpe, without the compromise of his principles. He has done with political strife for ever.

On the 31st of October, 1663, there is a coach waiting before the hall of Owthorpe. That hall is filled with tenants and labourers. Their benefactor cheerfully bids them farewell; but his wife and children are weeping bitterly. That coach is soon on its way to London with the husband and wife, and their eldest son and daughter. At the end of the fourth day's journey, at the gates of that fortress within which she had been born, Lucy Hutchinson is parted from him whose good and evil fortunes she has shared for a quarter of a century.

About a mile from Deal stands Sandown Castle. In 1664, Colonel Hutchinson is a prisoner within its walls. It was a ruinous place, not weatherproof. The tide washed the dilapidated fortress; the windows were unglazed; cold, and damp, and dreary was the room where the proud heart bore up against physical evils. For even here there was happiness. Lucy is not permitted to share his prison; but she may visit him daily. In the town of Deal abides that faithful wife. She is with him at the first hour of the morning; she remains till the latest of night. In sunshine or in storm, she is pacing along that rugged beach, to console and be consoled.

Eleven months have thus been passed, when Lucy is persuaded by her husband to go to Owthorpe to see her children.

'When the time of her departure came, she left with a very sad and ill-presaging heart.' In a few weeks John Hutchinson is laid in the family vault in that Vale of Belvoir.

Lucy Hutchinson sits in holy resignation in the old sacred

home. She has a task to work out. She has to tell her husband's history for the instruction of her children:—‘I that am under a command not to grieve at the common rate of desolate women, while I am studying which way to moderate my woe, and if it were possible, to augment my love, can, for the present, find out none more just to your dear father, nor consolatory to myself, than the preservation of his memory.’

ASTROLOGICAL ALMANACS.

THE stormy period from the rupture of Charles I. with his Parliament to the Revolution, was the golden age of astrology in England. James I., 'the wisest fool in Christendom,' did little more for 'the art' than to grant the monopoly of promulgating its absurdities in almanacs to the Universities and the Stationers' Company. As a matter of state craft, this was a politic measure. Almanacs have always had a considerable influence upon the opinions of the common people; and it was, therefore, prudent to secure the compliance of a powerful body of men with the wishes of the ruling authority. The French government, half a century earlier, had forbidden the almanac-makers to prophesy at all: but it was a more subtle device to render the liberty of prophesying profitable to those who would take especial care that their 'old men should dream dreams' after that holy and legitimate fashion which should give 'the right divine of kings' the last and best varnish of superstition, wherewith it might shine and look lovely in the eyes of the ignorant multitude. The Universities, to their honour be it spoken, grew ashamed of their participation in this pious work; but they were not ashamed of the lucre which their share of the monopoly produced. They sold their right to the Stationers' Company; and that company earned their title to this and other privileges so fully, that in the next century they had the honour of being called 'the literary constables to the Star Chamber, to suppress all the science and information to which we owe our freedom.'

But Charles I. did even more than his sapient father. He not only encouraged astrology, but he affected to believe in it. He raised up Lilly and Gadbury from the low con-

dition in which they were born, to publish the 'Royal Horoscope,' and to threaten disobedient subjects with malignant aspects of the stars. But Charles could not secure even the loyalty of the astrologers. The Stationers' Company always had especial reason for being on the side of the ruling power. They could always see clearly, 'by the help of excellent glasses,' who would be lord of the ascendant. They prophesied for Cromwell as they had prophesied for Charles; they sang 'Te Deum' for the Restoration, as they had done for the Protectorate; and although they dated their little books from the year 'of our deliverance by King William from popery and arbitrary government,' they had not forgotten to invoke the blessings of the planets upon the last of the Stuarts; and to prognosticate all the evils of comets and eclipses upon those who resisted his paternal sway.

Lilly was unquestionably the prince of the powers of the air in those glorious days of horoscopes and witch-burnings. He was originally a domestic servant; but he was not satisfied to tell fortunes to the wenches of the kitchen, or to predict the recovery of a stolen spoon. In 1633 he boldly published the horoscope of Charles I., at the period when that unfortunate prince was crowned king of Scotland. Charles had either too much weakness or too much cunning to put the impostor in the pillory, as one might have expected from the friend of Strafford and the patron of Rubens. The astrologer was for years in the habit of giving counsel to the monarch. Whether he predicted evil or good in their private moments we are not informed; but the presumption is that astrologers could flatter as well as lords of the bedchamber. It is doubtful whether Charles found as much truth in the predictions of Lilly, as when he consulted the *Sortes Virgilianæ*, with Falkland, at Oxford. The old impostor, however, was not content to be cabinet counsellor of the king. In 1644 he began to prophesy for the ear of the whole world; and he went onward through good report and evil report till he acquired a considerable fortune, bought an estate at Hersham, near Walton-upon-

Thames, and died there in 1681. In his old age he became cautious in his prophecies; and was fearful, according to his own words, 'of launching out too far into the deep, lest



Lilly.

he should give offence.' There is no doubt, however, of his semi-belief in his art. He deluded others till he was himself deluded.

Gadbury, who was originally the pupil of Lilly, became eventually his arch-rival and enemy; and when the one published his 'Merlinus Anglicus,' the other had his 'Anti-Merlinus.' Lilly, some three or four years before he was removed to learn the value of all attempts to penetrate into futurity, from the lessons of 'the great teacher Death,' thought fit to contradict 'all flying reports' of his decease, 'spread abroad for some years past.' The astrolo-

gers of that day had a wicked trick of vilifying each other, by anticipating the summons of the Fates; and thus Lilly himself, when he could not write down Gadbury, an-



John Gadbury.

nounced to the world that his disciple, whom he proscribed as a monster of ingratitude, had perished in the passage to Barbadoes. But Gadbury outlived his master ten years, very much to his own satisfaction. He had a narrow escape in the days of Titus Oates, for he was a staunch Catholic, and had no belief in the 'horrid, popish, jacobite plot,' from the epoch of which Partridge dated to our own day. Partridge hated Gadbury as much as Gadbury hated Lilly; and when Gadbury died, Partridge published the history of what he called 'his Black Life.' But though Gadbury was dead, the Stationers, according to their most indubitable privilege in all such cases, continued to publish his almanacs, till another Gadbury (Job) succeeded to the honours and emoluments of his worthy relative, and prophesied through another generation of most credulous dupes.

Swift has conferred an immortality upon John Partridge, whom he killed as an almanac-maker in 1709. The old man, at the time when this wicked wit assailed him, had been nearly forty years labouring in his vocation. He appears, originally, to have been a harmless, and, for an almanac-maker, somewhat sensible person. When Swift assailed him he had passed his grand climacteric; and though the almanac perished in this memorable affray, the man lived for six years after Bickerstaff had killed him. But when Partridge refused any longer to predict, the Stationers' Company did not choose to be laughed out of the profit of his reputation for prediction. They accordingly, in 1710, printed a Partridge's almanac, with Partridge's portrait, which Partridge never wrote. During the three succeeding years the publication was discontinued; but in 1714, the year before the mortal part of the astrologer died, Partridge's 'Merlinus Liberatus' again made its appearance; and went dragging on a decrepit existence, with the sins of a century and a half upon its head.

Swift's account of Partridge's death is one of the most pungent pieces of solemn humour which the genius of that most terrific of controversialists ever produced. No wonder that it killed the almanac for a season, though the man escaped. The confession of the astrologer is admirable:—"I am a poor ignorant fellow, bred to a mean trade, yet I have sense enough to know, that all pretences of foretelling by astrology are deceits, for this manifest reason—because the wise and learned, who can only judge whether there be any truth in this science, do all unanimously agree to laugh at and despise it; and none but the poor ignorant vulgar give it any credit, and that only upon the word of such silly wretches as I and my fellows, who can hardly write or read." I then asked him, why he had not calculated his own nativity, to see whether it agreed with Bickerstaff's prediction. At which he shook his head, and said, "Oh! sir, this is no time for jesting, but for repenting these fooleries, as I do now from the very bottom of my heart!" "By what I can gather from you," said I, "the

observations and predictions you printed with your almanacs were mere impositions on the people?" He replied, "If it were otherwise, I should have the less to answer for. We have a common form for all these things; as to foretelling the weather, we never meddle with that, but leave it to the printer, who takes it out of any old almanac, as he thinks fit."

It is a hundred and forty years* since this attack, which one would have thought irresistible, was levelled against the prophecy-makers of the Stationers' Company; but these fooleries still exist amongst us. At the time of Swift, the greater part of the astrologers of the civil wars had long been dead; but the almanacs, which were issued from this great patent store-house of imposture, bore the names of their original authors. 'Poor Robin, Dove, Wing, and several others do yearly publish their almanacs, though several of them have been dead since before the Revolution.' The individual men were gone; but the spirit of delusion, which they had originally breathed into their works, was not extinguished by their death, for the *corporation* of the Stationers' Company could never die.

Francis Moore, 'Physician,' began his career of imposture in 1698; and, by the condensation within himself of all the evil qualities of his contemporaries, he gradually contrived to extinguish the lives, and then, with a true vampire-spirit, to prey upon the carcasses, even up to the present hour, of Lilly, Gadbury, Lord, Andrews, Woodhouse, Dade, Pond, Bucknall, Pearce, Coelson, Perkins, and Parker,—the illustrious and the obscure cheats of the seventeenth century. One hundred and fifty-five years is a pretty long career of imposture. Poor Robin, the hoary jester of the fraternity, gave up the ghost a quarter of a century ago, after a life of iniquity longer than that of Old Parr or Henry Jenkins. Heaven avert the omen from Francis Moore!

As the old astrologers died in the body, and their spirits,

* This, and other dates of the same character, are the same as in the first edition of this volume, 1854.

after lingering awhile near 'Paul's,' reposed also, the Stationers' Company raised up new candidates for the emoluments and honours of their trade of 'using subtil craft to deceive and impose on his Majesty's subjects.' At the beginning of the reign of George III., Andrews, and Parker, and Pearce, and Partridge, and Moore, were still



Francis Moore, 1657. From an anonymous Print.

flourishing, of the old set; but the more glorious names were gone to enjoy the celestial converse of Albumazar and Raymond Lully. Their places were filled (how ignoble!) by Saunders and Season, and Tycho Wing. Even these are gone. Moore alone remains upon this wicked earth, where common-sense walks abroad and laughs at him as the forlorn mummer of a bygone generation. He now belongs to 'ONCE UPON A TIME.'

MAY-FAIR.

THIS region of fashion was, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, a large field, extending from Park Lane almost to Devonshire House, in the West; and comprising the space to the North where the famous Lord Chesterfield, in the middle of that century, built his magnificent mansion, and looked with pride upon his spacious garden from the windows of his noble library. The brook of Tyburn ran through this district, so that the place was also called Brook Field, which name is still preserved in Brook Street. In this Brook Field was held an Annual Fair, commencing on the 1st of May, which, without going back into more remote antiquity, had been not only a market for all commodities, but a place of fashionable resort, in the early years of the Restoration. Mr. Pepys was a visitor there in 1660.

The 'general character of 'May-Fair may be gathered from an advertisement of the 27th of April, 1700:—'In Brook Field Market-place, at the East Corner of Hyde Park, is a Fair to be kept for the space of sixteen days, beginning with the 1st of May: the first three days for live cattle and leather; with the same entertainments as at Bartholomew Fair: where there are shops to be let, ready built, for all manner of tradesmen that annually keep fairs; and so to continue yearly at the same place.'

The surprise that we may feel in thus learning that the business of buying and selling 'cattle and leather' was to continue for three days, at the extreme West of our Metropolis, may be diminished by considering that the district was essentially a suburb, very thinly peopled; that to the North there were no streets; that where Apsley House now stands was a low inn, called the 'Hercules

Pillars;' and a little farther West a roadside watering-place, known as the 'Triumphant Chariot;' that the villagers of Kensington and Chelsea seldom penetrated into London proper; that the Fair of Brook Field was, there-



Old Watering-house, Knightsbridge, as it appeared in 1841.

fore, a matter of as much convenience as the great Fair of Bury, or any other of the country marts to which dealers brought their commodities. That it was something more than a market for cattle and leather, and a collection of stalls for the sale of gingerbread and beer, we learn from

the announcement that 'there are shops ready built for all manner of tradesmen.'

The observance of May was one of those ancient peculiarities of our national character which required an essential change of manners to eradicate. Enactments could not put down May-poles and morris-dancers. A Parliamentary Ordinance, in 1644, directed all and singular May-poles, that are or shall be erected, to be taken down and removed by the constables of the parishes. The May-pole in the Strand bowed its head to this ruthless command. There, in 1634, had the first stand of hackney-coaches been established—four coaches with men in livery, with fares arranged according to distances. But the May-pole did not fall unhonoured. There was a lament for the May-pole, 'which no city, town, nor street can parallel;' and the Cavalier-poet sighs over the 'happy age,' and the 'harmless days,' 'when every village did a May-pole raise:' 'times and men are changed,' he says. It was true. The May-pole in the Strand, and the hackney-coaches, were somewhat incongruous companions. After twenty years of strife and blood came the Restoration; and the Cavaliers believed that 'times and men' were not changed. A new May-pole was to be raised, in 1661—a 'stately cedar' of enormous height, which landmen were unable to raise; and so the Duke of York commanded seamen 'to officiate the business;' and the May-pole was hoisted up, in four hours, to the sound of drum and trumpet; and a morris-dance was danced, to pipe and tabor, as blithely as in the days of Elizabeth; and 'little children did much rejoice, and ancient people did clap their hands, saying, "Golden days begin to appear."' In 1672 the mighty May-pole—the most prodigious one for height that perhaps was ever seen,' says old Aubrey—was broken by a high wind. The Revolution came, and then the contests of faction, and a foreign war, gave the people graver subjects to think of than 'Whitsun ales and May games' The broken May-pole of the Strand gradually decayed and became a nuisance; but it had a higher destiny—typical

of the changes of 'times and men.' In 1717 it was carted away to Wanstead, under the direction of Newton, and there set up to support the largest telescope in the world, which had been presented to the Royal Society by a French Member, M. Huyon. The age of morris-dancers was about to be superseded by the age of Science; and in due time would come the age of the Mechanical Arts. A century ago Hume said, 'We cannot reasonably expect that a piece of woollen cloth will be brought to perfection in a nation that is ignorant of astronomy.' The power-loom is the natural descendant of the telescope in Wanstead Park.

On May morning, in 1701, it is not unlikely that a few of the busy London population were dancing round the broken May-pole in the Strand. The chimney-sweepers had not yet taken exclusive possession of this festival; but the milk-maids, with their garlands, might be there as the representatives of rural innocence. The great bulk of the holiday-makers would abandon the May-pole for the keener excitement of May-Fair. For there (according to the evidence of a letter from Mr. Brian Fairfax, of 1701) would be attraction for all classes. 'I wish you had been at May-Fair, where the rope-dancing would have recompensed your labour.' There, according to the 'Tatler,' was Mr. Penkethman, with his tame elephant; and there were wont to be 'many other curiosities of nature.' There were theatres with 'gentlemen and ladies, who were the ornaments of the town, and used to shine in plumes and diamonds.' There, was 'Mrs. Saraband, so famous for her ingenious puppet-show,'—the proprietress of 'that rake-hell, Punch, whose lewd life and conversation had given so much scandal.' There, was the conjuror, and the mountebank, and the fire-eater. But, more attractive than all, there, was 'Lady Mary,' the dancing lass—a very jewel, according to Brian Fairfax. 'All the nobility in town were there. Pray ask my Lord Fairfax after her, who, though not the only lord by twenty, was every night an admirer of her, while the fair lasted.' But there were

great rarities of Art to be seen—specimens of ingenuity that might rival 1851. ‘There was the city of Amsterdam, well worth your seeing; every street, every individual house, was carved in wood, in exact proportion, one to another; the Stadthouse was as big as your hand.’ The city of Amsterdam might attract discreet observers, who kept out of the way of the bull-bait and the ducking-pond—polite sports to which Young England, in the last century, was somewhat addicted. Last of all, there was the sober business of the fair—the real work transacted in the ‘shops’ that were ‘let, ready built, for all manner of tradesmen.’

Of the commodities exposed for sale in these temporary shops would, first of all, be clothing. Of woollen fabrics there would be abundance. The great work of legislation was to keep all the wool at home, and to make the people wear nothing but woollen garments. A writer of 1698 says:—‘Men are very careful to preserve their rents; but, above all, gentlemen are in the greatest disquiet for their wool. Both the living and the dead must be wrapt in wool; nor is any law wanting to complete the business, but only one,—that our perukes should be made of wool.’ The great problem of legislation was how to encourage the growth of wool, and the manufacture of wool; and a perpetual controversy was going on between the manufacturers and the agriculturists. The agriculturists were then the free-traders,—they wanted a foreign market for their wool: the manufacturers would have kept it all at home. But they both agreed that nothing which interfered with wool should be worn in England. Silk buttons were an article of dress: the silk was bought in foreign parts in exchange for our woollen manufacture; but the making of silk buttons, says the Act of 1698, was discouraged by making buttons out of the shreds of cloth,—and thousands of men, women, and children, who made silk buttons with the needle, were impoverished; and so a penalty of forty shillings was to be paid by any unhappy tailor who used his shreds to make buttons. But this

microscopic legislation was always working in the dark. In 1697 the importation of foreign lace and needlework was absolutely prohibited, because the importation was 'to the great discouragement of the manufactures in this kingdom.' In 1699 the Act of 1697 was repealed, on account of the decay of the woollen manufactures, because the prohibition of foreign lace and needlework 'has been one great cause thereof, by being the occasion that our woollen manufactures are prohibited to be imported into Flanders.' At May-Fair, in 1701, there must have been a keen competition amongst the fashionable ladies for the last chance of a purchase in the fair of Indian silks and calicoes; for after the 29th of September the wearing of all wrought silks of the manufacture of Persia, China, or India, and all coloured calicoes, was absolutely prohibited. The whole principle of our commercial legislation was protection,—to have no real exchange with other countries, and no free industry in our own commodities. The interest of the consumer was never regarded. The perpetual cry was the duty of employing the poor,—in regulating which employment the poor were starved. There was but one man of those days who had discovered the broad truths of commerce, which he promulgated in these words:—'The whole world, as to trade, is but one nation or people, and therein nations are as persons. * * * There can be no trade unprofitable to the people, for if any prove so, men leave it off. * * * No laws can set prices on trade. * * * All favour to one trade or interest is an abuse, and cuts off so much profit from the public.' It is a hundred and sixty years ago since the great merchant, Sir Dudley North, proclaimed these principles,—the highest application of which belongs to our day.

But, with all the defects of the class-legislation that prevailed in the first year of the eighteenth century, England was advancing in commercial prosperity. In five years after the peace of Ryswick the exports were more than doubled; and the mercantile marine more than quad-

rupted. The exports in 1701 were about six millions, of which about four millions consisted of our own produce and manufactures,—one-eighteenth part of our present exports. In 1701 the mercantile navy carried about three hundred thousand tons,—about one-fifteenth part of our present tonnage. The navigation laws, which it has required the slow growth of political philosophy to abolish, bit by bit, during two centuries, were held to be the foundation of our marine superiority. And yet, whilst an exclusive protection was given to English-built vessels, worked by English seamen, we utterly lost the old Greenland whale-fishery for want of skilled crews. At the Revolution the agriculture of the country required a stimulus, so the bounty system was commenced. Foreign corn could not be brought in except when scarcity prevailed at home, and the exporters of English wheat received a bounty of five shillings a quarter, when the home price did not exceed forty shillings. The Dutch stored the wheat, which the bounty to the grower enabled them to buy at a cheaper rate than the average European price, and sold it us again, in dear seasons, at a large profit. All commerce was a system of restriction, evasion, and compromise, resting upon the belief that one nation's gain was another's loss—and that commercial advantage was only to be measured by the balance of money received for commodities, and not by the exchange of the useful products of industry, varying with the peculiar soil, climate, and manners of the exchangers.

At this period England was not, in any large sense of the term, a manufacturing country. With the exception of our woollen cloths—which amounted to nearly half our exports—some articles of raw produce were our chief shipments to foreign countries. The principal products of our mines were lead and tin, both of which we exported. Tin was in great demand, both at home and abroad, on account of the extension of luxurious habits, which required pewter plates instead of wooden trenchers. We raised and smelted no copper, but imported it unwrought. The greater part

of our iron was also imported. No beds of rock-salt had been worked,—edible salt was imported,—for the wretched produce of our brine-pits was nauseous and injurious. And yet salt was of prime necessity at a period when the rotation of crops was unknown, and winter-food for sheep and cattle not being raised, the greater number were killed and salted at Martinmas. The coal-mines were limited in their produce,—partly by the want of machinery, and partly by the difficulty of communication. The greater part of the coal consumed in the kingdom was sea-borne—hence called sea-coal; but occasionally pack-horses travelled with coal inland, for the supply of blacksmiths' forges. Factories, in the modern sense, did not exist. Even the great wool manufacture was, in most of its processes, domestic. Weavers left their shuttles idle in their cottages, when harvest work demanded their labour in the fields; and this, not as a matter of choice, but under legal compulsion.

The Norwich and the Yorkshire looms were the subjects of minute regulation, as to wages and material. We imported spun silk for our Spitalfields looms. John Lombe built his Derby silk-mill in 1717. An ingenious adventurer, who made the attempt in 1702, was ruined. Our linen fabrics were imported from France, Germany, and Holland, and so were our threads. We manufactured hats and glass only after the accession of William the Third, when the war with France drove us to employ our capital and skill in their production. It was the same with paper. Before the Revolution there was little made in England, except brown paper. We imported our writing and printing papers from France and Holland. We imported our crockery-ware, which retained the name of Delft, even when our Potteries had begun to work. Sheffield produced its old 'whittle'—the common knife for all uses; but the finer cutlery was imported from France. We obtained most of our printing-type from Holland—not that England wanted letter-founders, but that their characters were so rude, that our neighbours supplied us, till an ingenious artist, William Caslon, established his London foundry in

1720. There was a demand then for types, for the age of newspapers was come. When England was restricted to twenty master-printers—as it was before the Revolution—there was little need of skilful type-founders.

In the May-Fair of 1701 the news-venders would be busy. There would be half-a-dozen papers bearing the name of 'Intelligence,' or 'Intelligencer;' there would be similar varieties of the family of 'Flying Post,' and 'Mercury,' and 'Observator;' there would be 'Dawks's News Letter, done upon good writing-paper, and blank space left, that any gentleman may write his own private business.' Each of these would hold less matter than a modern column. The writers upon Dawks's 'good writing-paper,' or any other paper, were not very numerous in a population of five millions. The Postage revenue was about sixty thousand pounds, which, averaging the rate of letters at threepence each (single sheets, carried under eighty miles, were twopence), would give us about a letter annually for each of the population; about two-thirds of the letters now delivered in one week; which show about eighteen letters annually for each of the population. The newspapers in May-Fair each had two or three advertisements—some of books, some of luxuries, which are now necessities of life—such as tea at twenty-four shillings a pound, loaf sugar at eleven shillings, coffee at six shillings. All had advertisements of lotteries. Every description of retail traffic was then carried on by gambling. At the 'Eagle and Child,' on Ludgate Hill, all sorts of fine silks and goods were to be had at seven pounds ten shillings a ticket; Mrs. Ogle's plate, value twenty pounds, was at sixpence a ticket; Mr. William Morris, 'the fairest of dealers,' draws his lottery out of two wheels by two parish-boys, giving one hundred pounds for half-a-crown. There were lotteries drawing in May-Fair, and the thimble-rig was not unknown.

The May morning of 1701 sees the busy concourse in Brook Field of sellers and buyers. There is the Jew from Houndsditch and the grazier from Finchley. From the

distant Bermondsey comes the tanner, with his peltry and his white leather for harness. Beer is freely drunk. Tobacco perfumes the air from one sunrise to another. It is almost difficult to believe that eleven million pounds of



Faux, the Conjuror.

tobacco were then annually consumed by a population of five millions; but so say the records. The graziers and the drovers were hungry: they indulged themselves with the seldom-tasted wheaten bread of the luxurious Londoners. They had waded through roads scarcely prac-

licable for horsemen. Pedestrians, who kept the crown of the causeway, on whose sides were perilous sloughs and foul ditches, travelled in company, for fear of the frequent highwayman and footpad. Happy were they when the sun lighted the highway from Tottenham or Tyburn; for not a lantern was to be seen, and the flickering link made the morning fog seem denser than its reality. That May-day morning has little cheerfulness in its aspect.

The afternoon comes. Then the beasts and the leather are sold—and the revelry begins. It lasts through the night. We need not describe the brutality of the prize-fighting, nor record the licentiousness of the Merry Andrew. All the poetical character of the old May sports was gone. It was a scene of drunkenness and quarrel. May-Fair became a nuisance. The Grand Jury presented it seven years after; and the puppets, and the rope-dancers, and the gambling-booths, the bruisers, and the thieves, had to seek another locality. When Fashion obtained possession of the site, the form of profligacy was changed. The thimble-riggers were gone; but Dr. Keith married all comers to his chapel. 'with no questions asked, for a guinea, any time after midnight till four in the afternoon.'

JOHN AUBREY, AND HIS EMINENT MEN.

THERE are few books that I take up more willingly in a vacant half-hour, than the scraps of biography which Aubrey, the antiquary, addressed to Anthony à Wood; and which were published from the original manuscripts in the Ashmolean Museum, in 1813. These little fragments are so quaint and characteristic of the writer—so sensible in some passages and so absurd in others—so full of what may be called the Prose of Biography, with reference to the objects of historical or literary reverence,—and so encomiastic with regard to others whose memories have wholly perished in the popular view—that I shall endeavour to look at them a little consecutively, as singular examples of what a clever man thought of his contemporaries and of others who were famous in his day, whether their opinions accord with, or are opposed to, our present estimates.

And first of John Aubrey himself.

Our common notion of the man used to be that he was a dreaming, credulous old gossip, with some literary pretensions, and nothing more. He believed in astrology, in omens, dreams, apparitions, voices, knockings. Is he without followers, even at this hour? Anthony à Wood, who was under many obligations to his correspondence, calls him 'a shiftless person, roving and maggoty-headed.' 'Roving,' indeed he was; for he wandered up and down the land when travelling was not quite so easy as now; and, according to the testimony of Gough, an antiquary after the sober fashion of the race, 'first brought us acquainted with the earliest monuments on the face of the country—the remains of Druidism, and of Roman, Saxon,

and Danish fortifications.' 'Shiftless,' too, he might be called. He possessed an estate in Kent, which was destroyed by an irruption of the sea; he became involved in law-suits; he made an unhappy marriage; in a word, to use his own astrological solution of his misfortunes, he was 'born in an evil hour, Saturn directly opposing my ascendant.' But he was not 'shiftless,' in the sense of one who had no proper business in life. He wanted little for his support, and as he had rich friends his dependence was not very burthensome to them. He lived about in country houses with kind squires, with whom he 'took his diet and sweet otiums.' What could the man do when his estates were gone, but to enjoy what he called 'a happy delitescency'—the obscurity of one who was never idle in noting down what he saw around him, for the use of others, or the benefit of those who were to come after him? He had no constructive power to make a great original book. His age was not an age of periodicals, when his gossiping propensities might have shaped themselves into articles fit for the literary market. It is true that he might have become an almanac-maker like some of his friends;—but perhaps there was a glut of the commodity. He had nothing for it but to lounge about in coffee-houses; and go to meetings of the Royal Society; and gossip with Mr. Evelyn and Mr. Isaac Walton; and venture to ask Mr. D'Avenant something about Shakspeare; and speak of Milton to Mr. Dryden when they met at Will's; and correspond with Mr. Tanner, and Mr. à Wood, the famous antiquaries; and study a horoscope with Mr. Dee, or Mr. Vincent Wing, the astrologers. If he had concentrated his power of picking up anecdotes, and recording sayings, upon more of the really eminent of his time, as he has done upon Hobbes and Milton, he might have left Boswell without the merit of being the first, as well as the greatest, in his line. Wood, according to Hearne, used to say of him—'Look! yonder goes such a one, who can tell such and such stories; and I'll warrant Mr. Aubrey will break his neck down stairs rather than miss him.' My venerable

friend Mr. Britton, in his 'Memoir of John Aubrey,'* terms the notice of him by D'Israeli, in the 'Quarrels of Authors,' 'hasty,' for D'Israeli calls him 'the little Boswell of his day.' We would desire no higher compliment for our 'curious and talkative inquirer.' D'Israeli certainly does not mean to lower Aubrey; for in the very passage which suggests the 'little Boswell,' Aubrey has been giving an account how Hobbes composed his 'Leviathan,' and then D'Israeli terms this passage 'very curious for literary students.'

Aubrey was born in 1626. He lived seventy-two years in the greatest period of transition in our English history. The despotic Buckingham ruled England when Aubrey was first opening his inquisitive eyes;—the Whig Somers was Chancellor when he closed them. He lived through the Civil War, the Commonwealth, the Restoration, the Revolution. When he first heard of literature, men were talking of Shakspeare, and Jonson, and Beaumont, and Fletcher;—when he prattled about his septuagenarian memories, Milton and Cowley were getting obsolete. The opinions and manners of the people were wholly changed. Aubrey gives a remarkable instance of this change. When the civil wars broke out, Hollar, the famous engraver, went into the Low Countries, where he stayed till about 1649. 'I remember he told me, that when he first came into England, which was a serene time of peace, the people, both poor and rich, did look cheerfully; but at his return, he found the countenances of the people all changed—melancholy, spiteful as if bewitched.'† In another place‡ Aubrey writes, with that half-poetry of his nature which made him superstitious, 'Before printing, Old Wives' Tales were ingenious; and since printing came in fashion, till a little before the Civil Wars, the ordinary sort of people were not taught to read. Now-a-days, books are

* Mr. Britton's Memoir is a handsome 4to volume, published by the Wiltshire Topographical Society; it contains a great deal of curious matter, collected with much care.

† Lives, p. 402.

‡ Anecdotes and Traditions, edited by J. Thom; p. 102.

common, and most of the poor people understand letters; and the many good books, and variety of turns of affairs, have put all the old fables out of doors. And the divine art of printing, and gunpowder, have frightened away Robin Good-fellow and the Fairies.' Bishop Corbet thought that the fairies went out when Protestantism came in. According to Aubrey they lingered till the people became readers. 'The variety of turns of affairs' made them readers. The change was beginning when Aubrey was in his swaddling-clothes. One almost of the latest masques of Jonson which was presented before James I., 'Time Vindicated,' whispers an echo of that turmoil whose hoarse sounds were still distant. Two 'ragged rascals' are thus described in the ante-masque:—

'One is his printer in disguise, and keeps
His press in a hollow tree, where, to conceal him,
He works by glow-worm light, the moon's too open.
The other zealous rag is the compositor,
Who, in an angle where the ants inhabit,
(The emblems of his labours,) will sit curl'd
Whole days and nights, and work his eyes out for him.'

This was the age of libels—'straws,' as Selden has it, 'thrown up to show which way the wind blows.' The 'press in a hollow tree' was no mere poetical exaggeration. That terrible machine did its work in silence and darkness. It laboured like a mole. If it was sought for in the garret, it was in the cellar; if it was hunted to the hovel, it found a hiding-place in the palace. The minds of men were in a state of preternatural activity. Prerogative had tampered with opinion, and opinion was too strong for it. The public mind, for the first time in England, began to want *news*—coarse provender for opinion to chew and ruminate. Jonson wrote his 'Staple of News,' in which we have an office with a principal and clerks busily employed in collecting and recording news, to be circulated by letter. The countrywoman at the office would have

'A groatworth of any news, I care not what,
To carry down this Saturday to our vicar.'

There was then, in reality, a weekly pamphlet of news published under the high-sounding editorial name of *Mercurius Britannicus*. Jonson had a right notion of what gave authority to such a publication :—

‘ See divers men’s opinions ! unto some
The very printing of ’em makes them news,
That have not the heart to believe anything
But what they see in print.’

Jonson called the newspaper ‘a weekly cheat to draw money;’ and he sets about ridiculing the desire for news, as if it were an ephemeral taste easily put down, and people had a diseased appetite for news, ‘made all at home, and no syllable of truth in them.’ The people were thirsting for pamphlets of news because therein they found glimpses of truth. The age was indeed credulous: but credulity and curiosity are nearly allied; and curiosity goes before comparison, and comparison goes before discontent, and discontent goes before revolt; and so in less than twenty years after Jonson’s ‘*Staple of News*’ the country was plunged in civil war. .

Anthony à Wood asked Aubrey to write these ‘*Lives*,’ seeing that he ‘was fit for it, by reason of his general acquaintance;’ and, in 1680, Aubrey sends the Oxford antiquary ‘*Minutes*,’ which ‘may easily be reduced into order.’ He says, that he undertook the task, ‘having now not only lived above half a century of years in the world, but have been also much tumbled up and down in it, which hath made me so well known. Besides the modern advantage of coffee-houses in this great city—before which men knew not how to be acquainted, but with their own relations or societies—I might add that I come of a longævous race, by which means I have wiped some feathers off the wings of time for several generations.’ These lives, as we have said, were first printed from the Ashmolean Manuscripts in 1813. They had been previously examined and used by Warton; and by Malone, who made a transcript of them. He also made some arrangement of the scattered papers. In the volumes of 1813 they are given alphabetically. Our notices

will pretend to no system ; but will be held together by some slight thread of association.

The first name that presents itself in this alphabetical order is that of 'Sir Robert Aiton, Knight.*' How many have looked upon his 'monumental bust,' in the south side of the choir of Westminster Abbey, without knowing what Aubrey tells us, that 'Sir Robert was one of the best poets of his time.' How many would have believed Aubrey, before our old poetry began to be appreciated, when he further records that 'Mr. Jo. Dryden says he has seen verses of his, some of the best of that age, printed with some other verses?' Look in the 'Biographia Britannica,' and you will find no Robert Aiton. Look in any collection of English poetry, and you will find no Robert Aiton. This Scot, a courtier of James I., was indeed known as the friend of Jonson, who told Drummond 'Sir Robert Ayton loved him dearly.' Burns found one of Ayton's poems in James Watson's 'Collection of Scots Poems,' and thought he 'improved the simplicity of the sentiments by giving them a Scots dress.†' It is not easy for one poet of genius to make an adaptation of the work of another poet. Let us hear forgotten Robert Ayton :—

' I do confess thou'rt smooth and fair,
And I might have gone near to love thee,
Had I not found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak had power to move thee.
But I can let thee now alone,
As worthy to be loved by none.

' I do confess thou'rt sweet, yet find
Thee such an unthrift of thy sweets,
Thy favours are but like the wind,
Which kisseth every thing it meets ;
And since thou can'st love more than one
Thou'rt worthy to be kissed by none.'

* The name is more properly spelt 'Ayton.'

† See Burns' song, beginning—

' I do confess thou art sae fair,
I wad been o'er the lugs in love,
Had I not found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak, thy heart could muve.'

But there is another poem by Burns, whose truth and tenderness has made many a heart thrill. He said himself that he 'took it down from an old man's singing.' But 'all his editors,' says Allan Cunningham, 'have considered it to have been written, either wholly or partially, by Burns.' Robert Ayton, whose memory might have died out, even though Dryden had praised his verses, if it had not been for the care of 'the Bannatyne Club,' and the accidental discovery of a MS. Collection of his Poems,* was the writer of *these* lines:—

' Should old acquaintance be forgot,
And never thought upon,
The flames of love extinguished,
And freely past and gone?
Is thy kind heart now grown so cold
In that loving breast of thine,
That thou can'st never once reflect
On old langsyne?'

What is fame, when such verses as these we have given were wrapt up in mummy-cloth for two centuries? How truly does Aubrey say, 'What uncertainty do we find in printed histories! They either treading too near on the heels of truth that they dare not speak plain; or else for want of intelligence, things being antiquated, become too obscure and dark.'

Who was Ayton, amongst Aubrey's 'Eminent Men?' The 'obscure and dark' has been made clear in his case. Who was Gregorie? Our antiquary tells us he was 'the famous peruque-maker,' and, moreover, that he 'was buried at St. Clements-Danes church door.' Famous indeed he was, according to this authority, for Baron Gregory, Baron of the Exchequer, wrote his epitaph in rhyme; and in Cotgrave's French Dictionary perukes are called Gregorians. Who can now tell us of the fashion of Gregory's perukes? 'Printed histories' are silent. Who was — Goodwyn? 'He was a general scholar and had a delicate wit; was a great historian and an excellent poet. He wrote, among

* The Poems of Sir Robert Ayton, edited by Charles Roger, 1844.

other things, a Pastoral, acted at Ludlow, about 1637, an exquisite piece.' Alas, for Goodwyn! In 1680, Aubrey also writes, 'he was as fine a gentleman as any in England, though now forgot.' How capricious is fame! There *was* a Pastoral—a Mask, I will call it—acted at Ludlow in 1634, which will never be forgot. The author of that poem had ample fame, too, in his life-time.* But no foreigners, I fear, would see the house and chamber where Goodwyn was born. Aubrey himself is somewhat a niggard of his praise as to another truly 'fine gentleman.' Richard Lovelace, he tells us, wrote a poem called 'Lucasta;' but no word of eulogy for Lovelace. 'He was an extraordinary handsome man, but proud * * *. George Petty, haberdasher, in Fleet Street, carried twenty shillings to him every Monday morning from Sir — Many, and Charles Cotton, but was never repaid.' Poor Lovelace! 'He died in a cellar, in Long Acre,' says Aubrey. Even in a cellar, he that wrote these lines must have had consolations which his persecutors could not feel:—

'Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage.
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.'

The cavalier, Lovelace, sings,

'When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
When healths and draughts go free,
Fishes that tipple in the deep
Know no such liberty.'

The republican friend of Milton, Andrew Marvell, according to Aubrey, 'would never drink hard in company, and was wont to say, that he would not play the good-fellow in any man's company in whose hands he would not trust his life.' In the early days of the Restoration, Marvell saved Milton

* See page 205.

from the wrath of the Royalists ; but with his longing for a constitutional government he knew there was danger in that profligate court of ' the merry monarch,' and he clung for safety to the ' allaying Thames,' at least in social life. But the coffee-house gossip of Aubrey, and his ' longævous' remembrances, are very minute about the ' follies of the wise,' and their secret indulgences, of which ' History' very properly doubteth. Thus, he tells us that Marvell ' kept bottles of wine at his lodging, and many times he would drink liberally by himself to refresh his spirits and exalt his muse.' The domestic tipplings which Aubrey records of the ' eminent' are very various, and somewhat amusing. Marvell drank wine to exalt his muse. Not so Bacon. ' His Lordship would often drink a good draught of strong beer (March beer) to bedwards, to lay his working fancy asleep, which otherwise would keep him from sleeping the great part of the night.' Aubrey has a ' small-beer' anecdote, too, of Bacon, which I should blush to record if I had the slightest belief in it : ' In his Lordship's prosperity, Sir Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, was his great friend and acquaintance ; but when he was in disgrace and want, he was so unworthy as to forbid his butler to let him have any more small-beer, which he had often sent for, his stomach being nice, and the small-beer of Gray's Inn not liking his palate.' Where could Aubrey have picked up this bit for his scandalous chronicle ? Bacon died the year Aubrey was born ; and Greville two years after. I dare say Aubrey and Drummond were both somewhat nearer the truth, in the matter of ' Canary,' when their subject was Ben Jonson. ' He would many times exceed in drink,' says Aubrey. ' Drink was one of the elements in which he lived,' says Drummond. Aubrey, however, is circumstantial about the influence of the element : ' Canary was his beloved liquor : then he would tumble home to bed, and when he had thoroughly perspired, then to study.' I should have thought that the roystering cavalier-poet, John Cleveland, would have furnished Aubrey with some bibulous anecdotes ; but he simply says, ' He and Sam Butler, &c., of Gray's Inn,

did hold a club every night.' No private toss-potting for them. Who were the *et-cæteras*? Surely Robert Herrick was of the number. Of him Aubrey has no record. But he 'that kept a pet pig which he taught to drink out of a tankard,'* must surely have been a true clubbable man during the thirteen years when he was wandering in London, away from his dull vicarage of Dean Prior, from which he had been ejected. How he revels and luxuriates in his 'Welcome to Sack!' How rapturously he invokes the great 'Ben' to

'Meet at those lyrick feasts
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tun,
Where we such clusters had
As made us nobly wild, not mad.'

These poets have left a Bacchanalian odour behind them. But there is a smack of tipsy jollity in every grade of society, as if in defiance of the Puritans. If Denham, who, according to Aubrey, 'was generally temperate in drinking,' was betrayed on one occasion, after being 'merry at the tavern,' into the fancy 'to get a plasterer's brush and a pot of ink, and blot out all the signs between Temple Bar and Charing Cross,'—what shall we say of Dr. Butler, a famous physician, who, our veritable record tells, 'would many times go to the tavern, but drink by himself: about nine or ten at night old Nell comes for him with a candle and lanthorn, and says, "Come home, you drunken beast?"' We wonder at Nell; for drunkenness in the days of James I. was the rule of good society. It was an awful time when Sir John Harrington writes, 'The ladies abandon their sobriety, and are seen to roll about in intoxication,'—and sincerely laments 'that the Gunpowder fright is got out of all our heads, and we are going on, hereabouts, as if the devil was contriving every man should blow up himself by wild riot, excess, and devastation of time and temperance.' It is no wonder that in that century, Aubrey, and every gossiping writer, has something to tell of good-fellowship

* See Quarterly Review, vol. iv. p. 172.

that went beyond the limits of reason,—and of that degradation of the learned, the witty, and the high-born, which we now associate with ignorance, stupidity, and menial condition. A great change for the better has taken place in our own day amongst all ranks.

But whilst we flatter ourselves that we are marvellously improved with regard to the grosser vices, let us be quite sure that we have retained the elevation of character that in those days made men fast friends and generous enemies. Aubrey has plenty of anecdotes which show that in a time of fiery politics and common danger there were high qualities evolved out of the strifes of the time, and that if 'men fell out they knew not why,' they could lay aside dirty revenges and life-long hatreds. George Withers got Denham's estate from the Parliament. After the Restoration Withers is in danger, for he had written bitter things against the Royalists. 'Sir John Denham went to the King, and desired his Majesty not to hang him, for that whilst George Withers lived, he, Sir John, should not be the worst poet in England.' The kind heart is as admirable as the ready wit. D'Avenant held a command under the Marquis of Newcastle in the Civil Wars, when he had the custody of two aldermen of York, who were contumacious in the matter of ransom. He treated the aldermen kindly, and at last suffered them to escape. When D'Avenant was in danger of his life from the Parliament, the aldermen made a journey to London, and succeeded in accomplishing his safety. Harrington, the republican, was a friend of Charles I.: 'The King loved his company, only he would not endure to hear of a Commonwealth; and Mr. Harrington passionately loved his Majesty. Mr. Harrington and the King often disputed about government.' Sir James Long was colonel of horse in a Royalist brigade. 'Oliver, Protector, hawking at Hounslow Heath, discoursing with him, fell in love with his company, and commanded him to wear his sword, and to meet him a hawking, which made the strict Cavaliers look on him with an evil eye.' The chivalric spirit was not quite extinct.

If the Boswell of the first coffee-houses gives us glimpses of the romance of biography, he more frequently lets down the heroic into the common ways of common men. I shall continue to gaze upon the richest side of the shield, in spite of Aubrey. When I think of Falkland, I shall see him as Clarendon has painted him. Let me look at the Secretary of Charles as he presents himself to my view, on the night before the battle of Newbury. The watch-fires of two armies are lighted. The King has marched into Newbury that afternoon. The Earl of Essex has advanced from Hungerford, and has found the royal forces in possession of the town, and of the low meadows immediately adjoining. He takes up his position on a little hill about a mile distant. It is midnight. Charles is sleeping. The fiery Rupert dreams of exterminating the rebel trained-bands. Falkland can take no rest. He walks by the side of the river amongst the outposts. He comes before me, shaping his melancholy thoughts into language:—‘Yes, John Hampden, my once friend, my beloved enemy, would I could follow thee to-morrow! Three months ago thou didst ride blithely on a sunny morning into the field of Chalgrave, and shortly thou didst ride out of the field with thy head hanging down and thy hands upon the neck of thy horse. A week of agony, John, and then to the grave of thy fathers. When we stood together, in our wordy war against exorbitances, we little thought it would come to this. Oh, Peace! Peace!’

Shall I give up this shadow of Falkland—shall I doubt Clarendon, who says that he rushed into danger, ‘that all might see that his impatience for peace proceeded not from pusillanimity, or fear to adventure his own person?’ Aubrey calls those who took the heroic view of Falkland’s death ‘superfine discoursing politicians,’ and says, ‘I have been well informed, by those that best knew him, and knew intrigues behind the curtain, as they say, that it was the grief of the death of Mistress Moray, a handsome lady at court, who was his mistress, and whom he loved above all creatures, was the true cause of his being so madly guilty

of his own death.' It may be. The private grief and the public were not incompatible. But I will not believe Aubrey when he depreciates those whom history loves. I will not believe that Falkland 'in his youth was very wild, and also mischievous, as being apt to stab.' I will not believe the story of Greville denying Bacon small-beer. I can believe that Raleigh 'was damnable proud.' I cannot believe of Sir Henry Saville, Provost of Eton, that he said 'when a young scholar was recommended to him for a good wit—"Out upon him, I'll have nothing to do with him; give me the plodding student. If I would look to wits I would go to Newgate: there be the wits!"' Some day or other I may be brought to believe what Aubrey says of Mr. William Shakspeare,—'his father was a butcher; and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade, but when he killed a calf he would do it in a high style, and make a speech.' But I will not believe that the great Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood by patient induction, said of Bacon, 'he writes philosophy like a Lord Chancellor.'

Some of the modes in which Aubrey deals with the habits and opinions of men are very characteristic, not only of the writer, but of his age. Newspapers were more feared than admired. Sir John Birkenhead, who was the editor of one of the earliest newspapers, 'Mercurius Aulicus,' 'would lie damnably.' A very singular editorial quality that! Admiral Blake, when at Oxford, 'would steal swans.' We may think less harshly, now, of Shakspeare's alleged deer-stealing. Of Butler, he writes, 'Satirical wits disoblige whom they converse with;' and yet Butler, according to his estimate, was 'a good fellow.' The habits and tempers of the race are not altered. He tells some stories of Bishop Corbet—not very clerical, but funny: 'After he was Doctor of Divinity he sang ballads at the cross at Abingdon, on a market-day. He and some of his camerades were at the tavern by the cross; the ballad-singer complained he had no custom—he could not put off his ballads. The jolly

Doctor puts off his gown and puts on the ballad-singer's leathern jacket, and being a handsome man, and had a rare full voice, he presently vended a great many, and had a great audience.' We can believe this of the author of 'The Fairies' Farewell.' There is real music in these lines :—

'When Tom came home from labour,
Or Ciss to milking rose,
Then merrily went their tabour,
And nimbly went their toes.'

Aubrey has a story of Sir Miles Fleetwood, Recorder of London, which sounds a little apocryphal: 'He was a very severe hanger of highwaymen, so that the fraternity were resolved to make an example of his worship, which they executed in this manner:—They lay in wait for him not far from Tyburn, as he was to come from his house in Bucks; had a halter in readiness; brought him under the gallows, fastened the rope about his neck, his hands tied behind him and servants bound, and then left him to the mercy of his horse, which he called Ball. So he cried, "Ho, Ball! Ho, Ball!" and it pleased God that his horse stood still till somebody came along, which was half a quarter of an hour or more.' Was the eminent example of the highwaymen of London known to the Porteous mob of Edinburgh in the next century? Lord Chief Justice Popham, according to Aubrey, deserved well to have been upon Ball instead of the active Recorder—Ball would have been wiser than to have stood still with Popham. For the Chief Justice obtained a park and a manor to save an honourable murderer's life. 'He for several years addicted himself but little to the study of the laws, but profligate company, and was wont to take a purse with them. His wife considered her and his condition, and at last prevailed upon him to lead another life, and to stick to the study of the law, which, upon her importunity, he did, being then about thirty years old. He spake to his wife to provide a very good entertainment for his camerades to take leave of them.' Memorandum

for a pair of historical pictures by Mr. Ward or Mr. Egg : The barrister at his rogues' feast ; the judge charging the jury for the murderer.

Some of Aubrey's Oxford recollections are amusing illustrations of University manners. Doctor Kettle is preaching at St. Mary's. The learned fellows are bound to hear Doctor Kettle, but not so their lackeys, and so the Divine concludes a sermon thus :—' But now I see it is time for me to shut up my book, for I see the Doctors' men come in wiping their beards, from the ale-house.' A good specimen, this, of a funeral-sermon, on a gentleman commoner, who died of the small-pox :—' He was the finest, sweetest young gentleman ; it did do my heart good to see him walk along the quadrangle. We have an old proverb, that hungry dogs will eat dirty puddings ; but I must needs say for this young gentleman, that he always loved sweet things.' A great geometry professor was Doctor Kettle. ' As they were reading and circumscribing figures, said he, " I will show you how to inscribe a triangle in a quadrangle. Bring a pig into the quadrangle, and I will set the college dog at him, and he will take the pig by the ear ; then come I and take the dog by the tail, and the hog by the tail, and so you have a triangle in a quadrangle." ' It was unkind in Aubrey to tell posterity these stories of the Principal of his own College, for the sagacious Doctor ' observed that, the houses that had the smallest beer had the most drunkards, for it forced them to go into the town to comfort their stomachs ; wherefore Dr. Kettle always had in his college excellent beer, not better to be had in Oxon.'

I have lingered about good old Aubrey somewhat too long, rather picking out some of his less familiar scraps than those which have been accepted in serious Biography. What he collected about Milton was really valuable ; and so of Hobbes, with whom he was intimate. Aubrey and all writers of his class, however trivial be their stories and quaint their remarks, have a value beyond that of the solemn annalists of the public deeds of past generations, who

put down very little from their own knowledge. 'We can read anywhere of the battle-field and the council-chamber—show us, if you can, the domestic interior. We are sated with state apartments; let us have a peep into the kitchen or the housekeeper's room.'*

* Quarterly Review, vol. xciii. p. 463.

THE BEGINNINGS OF POPULAR LITERATURE.

SECTION I.

THE history of Cheap Popular Literature is a long and instructive chapter of the history of the condition of the People. Before the invention of printing there was little literature that could be called popular, and none that could be called cheap. But in the very earliest stages of the press, all books would be comparatively cheap, and all literature to a certain extent popular. Our first printer, as we regard his works, had a most especial eye to the largest number of readers. We have no record of the price of his books beyond the fact that one of them was sold for 6s. 8d., a price equal to that of a quarter of wheat. But the subjects of his books, for the most part, show that he thought it his especial business to simplify knowledge, and to furnish reading for amusement. We can scarcely call any of his books learned. What there is of science in them was of a popular sort, and illustrated by diagrams. The histories were those of our old legendary chronicles, as attractive even as the romances of chivalry which accompanied them. His poetry was chiefly that of one of the great minds whose essential attribute is that of universality. Caxton went to the largest number of readers that his age presented to him.

It is a remarkable characteristic of the first century of printing, not only in this country, but wherever a press was erected, that the highest and most constant efforts of the new art were addressed to the diffusion of the old stores of knowledge, rather than to an enlargement of the

stores. The early professors of the art on the continent, in Germany, Italy, and France, were scholars who knew the importance of securing the world's inheritance of the knowledge of Greece and Rome from any further destruction, such as the scattered manuscripts of the ancient poets, orators, and historians had experienced, through neglect and ignorance. The press would put them fairly beyond the reach of any new waste. But after the first half-century of printing, when these manuscripts had been copied in type, and the public libraries and the princes and nobles of Europe had been supplied, a fresh want arose out of the satisfaction of the former want. Men of letters, who did not belong to the class of the rich, anxiously demanded copies of the ancient classics; and their demands were not made in vain. The Alduses, and Stephenses, and Plantins, did not hold it good to keep books dear for the advancement of letters; they anxiously desired to make them cheap, and they produced, therefore, not expensive folios only, as their predecessors had done, but neat and compactly printed octavos and duodecimos, for the general market. The instant that they did this, the foundations of literature were widened and deepened. They probably at first over-rated the demand; indeed, we know they did so, and they suffered in consequence. But the time was sure to come when their labours would be rewarded; and, at any rate, they were at once placed beyond a servile dependence upon patrons. When they had their customers in every great city and university, they did not wait for the approving nod of a pope or a cardinal before they began to print.

A new demand very soon followed upon the first demand for cheap copies of the ancient classics, and this was even more completely the demand of the people. The doctrines of the Reformation had proclaimed the Bible as the best spiritual guide and teacher, and the people would have Bibles. The first English Bible was bought up and burnt; those who bought the Bibles contributed capital for making new Bibles, and those who burnt the Bibles advertised

them. The first printers of the Bible were, however, cautious; they did not see the number of readers upon which they were to rely for a sale. In 1540, Grafton printed but 500 copies of his complete edition of the Scriptures; and yet, so great was the rush to this new supply of the most important knowledge, that we have existing 326 editions of the English Bible, or parts of the Bible, printed between 1526 and 1600.

The early English printers did not attempt what the continental ones were doing for the ancient classics. Down to 1540 no Greek book had appeared from an English press. Oxford had only printed a part of Cicero's Epistles; Cambridge, no ancient writer whatever: only three or four old Roman writers had been reprinted, at that period, throughout England. But a great deal was done for public instruction by the course which our early printers took; for, as one of them says, 'Divers famous clerks and learned men translated and made many noble works into our English tongue, whereby there was much more plenty and abundance of English used than there was in times past.' The English nobility were, probably, for more than the first half-century of English printing, the great encouragers of our press: they required translations and abridgements of the classics, versions of French and Italian romances, old chronicles, and helps to devout exercises. Caxton and his successors abundantly supplied these wants; and the impulse to most of their exertions was given by the growing demand for literary amusement on the part of the great. Caxton, speaking of his 'Boke of Eneydos,' says, 'This present book is not for a rude uplandish man to labour therein, nor read it.' But a great change was working in Europe; the 'rude uplandish man,' if he gave promise of talent, was sent to school. The priests strove with the laity for the education of the people; and not only in Protestant but in Catholic countries, were schools and universities everywhere founded. Here, again, was a new source of employment for the press—A, B, C's, or Abseys, Primers, Catechisms, Grammars, Dictionaries,

were multiplied in every direction. Books became, also, during this period, the tools of professional men. There were not many works of medicine, but a great many of law; and even the people required instruction in the ordinances they were called upon to obey, which they received in the form of proclamations.

The course of the early printers was based upon the principle that they could produce books cheaper by the press than by the scribe. This point once established, the next fact would be also clear—that the more impressions they printed the cheaper the book could be afforded. Beyond this great fact there was a difficulty. There would arise in their minds the same doubt which has puzzled all printers and booksellers from the time of Caxton to our times; which is at the bottom of all controversies about dear books and low-priced books at the present hour; and which will continue to perplex the producers of books, even should the entire population beyond infancy become readers, and have the means of purchasing books in some form or other. That question is simply a commercial one, and is perfectly independent of any schemes of public or private generosity for the enlightenment of the people; it is—Given the subject of a book, its mode of treatment, the celebrity or otherwise of its author, its amount of matter—what is the natural limit of its first sale, and the necessary ratio of its published price? If the probable demand be under-rated, there will be a high price, which will restrict the natural demand; and if over-rated, there will be a low price, which will curtail the natural profit. This is scarcely a question for enthusiasts for cheapness to decide, upon the broad assertion that a large sale of low-priced books will be more profitable than a small sale of high-priced books.

In 1825, Archibald Constable, then the great publisher, propounded to the then 'Great Unknown,' his plan for revolutionizing 'the art and traffic of bookselling.' He exhibited the annual schedule of assessed taxes, having reckoned the number of persons who paid for each separate

article of luxury ; and from that document he calculated that, if he produced every year 'twelve volumes so good that millions must wish to have them, and so cheap that every butcher's callant may have them, if he please to let me tax him sixpence a week,' he should sell them, 'not by thousands or tens of thousands, but by hundreds of thousands—ay, by millions.' It is recorded that a worthy divine, instructing his bookseller to publish a sermon of his composition, decided that at least twelve thousand should be the number printed, he having calculated that one copy would be required in each parish by the clergyman alone, to say nothing of chance customers. These statistics were ingenious, but they were not safe guides. The callants did not consent to be taxed sixpence a week ; and the rectors and curates did not rush to St. Paul's Churchyard to buy up the limited impression of the sermon.

But the Edinburgh publisher, and the rural divine, were nevertheless right in their endeavour to find some principle upon which they could determine the probable demand for a literary work. Constable proposed to himself the union of goodness and cheapness, to create a demand that (still using his own words) would have made him 'richer than the possession of all the copyrights of all the quartos that ever were, or will be, hot-pressed.' The goodness without the cheapness might have produced little change in the market ; the cheapness without the goodness might have been more influential. But, with the truest combination of these qualities, there is nothing so easy or so common as to over-rate a demand in the commerce of books. The price of a book aspiring to the greatest popularity can only be settled by an estimate of the probable number of readers at any one time in the community, and by a still more difficult estimate of the sort of reading which is likely to interest the greatest number. The same difficulty arises with regard to every new book, and has always arisen. The amount of the 'reading public,' with its almost endless subdivisions, arising out of station, or age, or average intelligence, or prevailing taste,

is very difficult to be estimated in our own day ; and there are not many authentic details ready to our hand upon which we can make an estimate for any past period. We will endeavour, out of these scanty landmarks, to collect some facts relating to the former state and progressive extension of the realms of print.

It is no modern discovery that a book cheap enough for the many amongst reading people to buy, and at the same time a book which the many would have a strong desire to buy, would be more advantageous to the manufacturer of books than a dear book which the few only could buy, and which the few only would desire to buy. There is preserved, in the handwriting of Christopher Barker, in 1582, 'A Note of the offices and other special licences for printing granted by her Majesty, with a conjecture of their valuation.*' This worthy printer to the Queen probably a little under-rated his own gains, when he says that the whole Bible requires so great a cost, that his predecessors kept the realm twelve years without venturing a single edition, but that he had desperately adventured to print four in a year and a half, expending about 3000*l.*, to the certain ruin of his wife and family if he had died in the time. Of these four editions, three were in folio, and one in quarto. The sale of the folios would necessarily be limited by the cost, in the way that the same unhappy patentee complains of as to his Book of Common Prayer, 'which few or none do buy except the minister.' But how stands the sale of smaller and less expensive books? Mr. Daye prints the Psalms in metre, which book, 'being occupied of all sorts of men, women, and children, and requiring no great stock for the furnishing thereof is therefore gainful.' The small Catechism is 'also a profitable copy, for that it is general.' Mr. Seres prints the Morning and Evening Prayer, with the Collects and the Litany ; and where poor Mr. Barker sells one Book of Common Prayer, 'he (Seres) furnisheth the whole parishes throughout the realm, which are commonly a

* *Archæologia*, vol. xxv. page 100, &c.

hundred to one.' But with all his laments and jealousies, Queen Elizabeth's printer, in those anti-commercial days, had hit the sound principle that is at the root of the commerce of books. There is one of the printers, he says, whose patent contains all dictionaries in all tongues, all chronicles and histories whatsoever; and his position is thus described:—'If he print competent numbers of each to maintain his charges, all England, Scotland, and much more, were not able to utter them; and if he should print but a few of each volume, the prices would be exceedingly great, and he in more danger to be undone than likely to gain.' Here are the Scylla and Charybdis of the book-trade. Let 'all good books on their first appearance appeal to the needy multitude,' says one adviser. Mr. Barker answers, 'All England, Scotland, and much more, were not able to utter them.' 'Let the rich and luxurious be first addressed,' say the old traditional believers that dearness and excellence are synonymous. Mr. Barker answers,—'Print but a few of each volume, at exceedingly high prices, and there is more danger of ruin than gain.'

The Note of Christopher Barker to Lord Burghley is an answer to a complaint that had been made in 1582, that the privileges granted to members of the Stationers' Company 'will be the overthrow of the printers and stationers within this city, being in number one hundred and seventy-five, and thereby the excessive prices of books prejudicial to the state of the whole realm.' In the absence of any knowledge of the numbers printed of a book, and of its consequent price, at the time of this complaint against the monopolists of charging 'excessive prices,' it may enable us to form some estimate of the character of the books issued in 1582, and thence of the quality of the readers of books, if we glance at two other sources of information—Ames and Herbert's 'Typographical Antiquities,' and Mr. Collier's 'Extracts from the Registers of the Stationers' Company.' The latter is especially valuable, as showing what was doing in the most popular literature—the literature of ballads and broadsides, of marvellous adventures

and merry tales—which matters Ames and Herbert rejected in a great degree.

In the twenty-fifth year of Queen Elizabeth then, we learn that the printers of London had a good deal of work to do, in the production of Bibles, Testaments, and Prayer-books—of A B C's, Primers, and Catechisms; of divinity, chiefly controversial; of almanacs and prognostications; of Latin books for grammar-schools; of grammars and dictionaries; of statutes and law-books. This was the staple work of the press, which had been going on from the beginning of the century, and constantly increasing. We learn from the 'Privy-purse Accounts of Elizabeth of York,' that, in 1505, twenty pence were paid for a Primer and a Psalter. This sum was equal to a week's wages of a labourer in husbandry. The Primer and the Psalter were scarcely for the labourer. In 1516 'Fitzherbert's Grand Abridgment,' then first published, cost the lawyer forty shillings—a price equal to the expense of a week's commons for all the students of Fitzherbert's inn. No doubt a century of printing in England had greatly lowered the price of all books that were essential instruments in the learned professions, or for the conduct of school education. But in the reign of Elizabeth the class of general readers had arisen; a class far more extensive than that of the clerks and noble gentlemen to whom our first printers addressed their translations of the classics, their French and Italian romances, their 'Gesta Romanorum,' their old chronicles, and their early poetry. It was a time of travel and adventure. In this year, 1582, we find printed 'Discovery and Conquest of the East Indies,' 'Discovery and Conquest of the Provinces of Peru, and also of the rich Mines of Potosi,' 'Divers Voyages touching the Discovery of America' (Hakluyt), 'Acts and Gestes of the Spaniards in the West Indies,' 'State of Flanders and Portugal.' 'A Discourse in commendation of Sir Francis Drake' had appeared in 1581. Frobisher had received his poetical 'Welcome Home,' by Churchyard, in 1579. Of historical works, we have none printed in 1582, with the exception

of 'The Life, Acts, and Death of the most noble, valiant, and renowned Prince Arthur,' which the readers of all classes would receive with undoubting mind as an authentic record. But solid books of history had very recently been produced. Holinshed had published his 'Chronicles;' Guicciardini had been translated by Jeffrey Fenton, and Herodotus by B. R.

The rude historical drama was then just arising to familiarise the people with their country's annals. In ten more years the press would teem with play-books; for the triumphant era was approaching of those whom, in 1579, Stephen Gosson denounced to uttermost perdition in his 'Pleasant invective against poets, pipers, jesters, and such-like caterpillars of a commonwealth.' That species of popular literature is almost absent from the Registers of 1582; but the materials upon which much of the romantic drama is founded were familiar to the readers of this period. Who were the readers, we may judge from the titles of some of these novels. One will indicate a class:— 'The Wonderful Adventures of Simonides, gathered as well for the instruction of our noble young gentlemen as our honourable courtly ladies.' The translators and writers of these romances seem to have had no notion of a class of readers beyond the circle of the rich and the high-born. Sidney's 'Arcadia' is called 'The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia;' and in his Dedication to 'My dear Lady and Sister,' he says, 'It is done only for you, and to you; * * * for indeed for severer eyes it is not, being but a trifle, and that triflingly handled.' A few years after came Robert Greene, and other writers of imagination, who were equally starved in writing plays for the stage-managers and stories for the stationers. Greene's 'Pandosto,' afterwards called 'Dorastus and Fawnia,' is a small quarto of fifty-six pages, in which Shakspeare found the story of 'The Winter's Tale.' The author describes this novelet as 'pleasant for age to avoid dreary thoughts; profitable for youth to eschew other wanton pastimes; and bringing to both a desired content.' He dedicates it 'To the Gentlemen Readers,

Health;' and to these 'Gentlemen' he says, 'If any condemn my rashness for troubling your ears with so many unlearned pamphlets, I will straight shroud myself under the shadow of your courtesies.' The scholar was addressing the 'gentlemen' of the Inns of Court and of the Universities. He was looking to a ruder class of readers when, in 1591, he published 'A Notable Discovery of Cosenage,' having himself, as he confesses, kept villainous company. This tract he addresses 'To the young Gentlemen, Merchants, Apprentices, Farmers, and plain Countrymen.' Here is a great extension of the reading public: but we have some doubts if Greene's tract ever reached 'Farmers and plain Countrymen.' The question arises, how were books to be circulated in the provinces? It was more than a century later before some of the largest towns, such as Birmingham, had their booksellers. The pedlers who kept the fairs and markets were the booksellers of the early days of the press. The last new pamphlet travelled into the country in the same pack with the last new ruff; it travelled many miles, and found few buyers. And yet for some popular books the demand was not contemptible. Sir Thomas Challoner translated 'The Praise of Folly,' of Erasmus, which was published in 1577; and the Stationers' Company stipulated with the publisher that he should print 'not above 1500 of any impression,' and that 'any of the Company may lay on with him, reasonably, at every impression.' Mr. Collier, who gives this curious extract from 'the Stationers' Registers,' thinks that this meant 'sharing the profits.' It meant that whilst the sheets were at press any member of the Company might print off a reasonable number for his own sale. To 'lay on' is still a technical term in printing. Challoner's Erasmus was an amusing book for the scholar, and had, no doubt, a special sale amongst teachers and students. Philip Stubbes, in his 'Anatomy of Abuses,' first published in 1583, bitterly complains that 'pamphlets of toys and babberies corrupt men's minds and pervert good wits;' and he especially laments that such books, being 'better

esteemed and more vendible than the godliest and sagest books that be,' have caused 'that worthy Book of Martyrs, made by that famous father and excellent instrument in God his Church, Master John Foxe, so little to be accepted.' We might have concluded that, even in those days of limited bookselling, the great popular book of the 'Acts and Monuments' would have had an universal sale, with its wonderful woodcuts and its deep interest for the bulk of the people. But when its excitement was simply historical, two centuries afterwards, the same book would be found in many a peasant's cottage, for the sole reason that it might be purchased in small portions by a periodical outlay. Whilst the wares of worthy John Fox were sleeping in the bookseller's warehouse, the people were buying their 'Almanacs and Prognostications,' which Christopher Barker, speaking of their patentee, calls 'a pretty commodity towards an honest man's living.' They were buying, in this year of 1582, 'The Dial of Destiny,' an astrological treatise; 'The Examination and Confession of Witches;' 'The Execution of Edmund Campion, the Jesuit;' 'The Interpretation of Dreams;' 'A Treatise of the rare and strange Wonders seen in the Air.' They were buying 'A Ballad of the Lamentation of a modest Maiden being deceitfully forsaken;' 'A Ballad entitled 'Now we go, or the Papists' new overthrow;' 'The picture of two pernicious Varlets, called Prig Pickthank and Clem Clawback;' 'A Ballad entitled a doleful Ditty, declaring the unfortunate hap of two faithful friends, the one went out of her wits and the other for sorrow died.' They were buying story-books in prose and rhyme,—accounts of murders and treasons, of fires and earthquakes,—and songs, 'old and plain.' The Court had its 'Euphues, very pleasant for all gentlemen to read;' and the City its mirror of Court manners, entitled 'How a young gentleman may behave himself in all companies.'

If we look very broadly at the character of the popular literature of the middle period of the reign of Elizabeth, and compare it with the popular literature of our own

day, we shall find that the differences are more in degree than in kind. We have purposely selected the period before the uprising of our great dramatic literature, which must have had a prodigious effect upon the intellectual condition of the people. There was a great deal of training going forward in the grammar-schools for the sons of tradesmen, and of the more opulent cultivators; but the rudiments of knowledge were not accessible to the labourers in rural districts, and the inferior handicraftsmen. There was, probably, no great distinction in the acquirements of the gentry and the burgesses. Some read with a real desire for information; some for mere amusement. Newspapers were not as yet. In the country-house, where reading was an occupation, there was Hall's 'Chronicle,' and Stow's 'Chronicle,' and, may be, his rival, Grafton's; there was Painter's 'Palace of Pleasure,' Tusser's 'Five Hundred Points of good Husbandry,' and, though Philip Stubbes denies its popularity, Fox's 'Book of Martyrs.' Chaucer and Gower had become obsolete in the courtly circles; but Surrey, and Sackville, and Gascoigne were dozed over after the noontide dinner. The peers and commoners who came to Court and Parliament bought the new Travels and Discoveries, and carried them into the country, for the solace of many a long winter evening's curiosity about 'antres vast and deserts idle.' The Greek and Roman classics were becoming somewhat popularly known through translations. But it is tolerably clear that much of the light reading, and most of the cheapest books, were rubbish spun over and over again out of the novels of Bandello, and Boccaccio, and Boisteau, and losing their original elegance in hasty and imperfect translations. The taste for such reading received its best counteraction when the stage became a noble instrument of popular instruction; and when those who did not frequent the theatres had a wondrous store of exciting fiction opened to them by a few plays of Shakspeare and many more of his contemporaries. It was in vain that puritanism, such as that of Prynne, denounced 'the ordi-

nary reading of Comedies, Tragedies, Arcadias, Amorous Histories, Poets,' as unlawful. They held their empire till civil war came to put an end to most home-studies, except that of party and polemical pamphlets. But even in the tempestuous times that preceded the great outbreak, Sir Henry Wotton, quoting the saying of a Frenchman, laments that 'his country was much the worse by old men studying the venom of policy, and young men reading the dregs of fancy.'

SECTION II.

IN a condition of society which may be characterised as that of a very imperfect civilisation—when communication is difficult, and in some cases impossible; when the influence of the capital upon the provinces is very partial and uncertain; when knowledge is for the most part confined to the learned professions—we must regard the rich upper classes precisely in the same relation to popular literature as we now regard the poor lower classes. We must view them as essentially uncritical and unrefined, swallowing the coarsest intellectual food with greediness, looking chiefly to excitement and amusement in books, and not very willingly elevating themselves to mental improvement as a great duty. When Ben Jonson speaks of the 'prerogative the vulgar have to lose their judgments, and like that which is naught'—when he derides the taste of 'the beast the multitude'—he also takes care to tell us that his description of those who 'think rude things greater than polished,' not only applied to 'the sordid multitude, but to the neater sort of our gallants: for all are the multitude; only they differ in clothes, not in judgment or understanding.* About the time when Jonson wrote thus—more calmly than when he denounced 'the loathed stage, and the more loathsome age'—Burton was exhibiting the intellectual condition of the gentry in his 'Anatomy of Melancholy:'

* Discoveries.

—‘ I am not ignorant how barbarously and basely for the most part our ruder gentry esteem of libraries and books; how they neglect and contemn so great a treasure, so inestimable a benefit, as Æsop’s cock did the jewel he found in the dunghill; and all through error, ignorance, and want of education.’ Again, he says, ‘ If they read a book at any time, ’tis an English chronicle, St. Huon of Bordeaux, Amadis de Gaul, &c., a play-book, or some pamphlet of news; and that at such seasons only when they cannot stir abroad.’ The ‘ pamphlet of news ’ was a prodigious ingredient in the queer cauldron of popular literature for the next half-century. Every one has heard of the thirty thousand tracts in the British Museum, forming two thousand volumes, all published between 1640 and 1660. The impression of many of these was probably very small; for Rushworth, to whom they became authorities, tells us that King Charles I. gave ten pounds for the liberty to read one at the owner’s house in St. Paul’s Churchyard. This was the twenty years’ work of Milton’s ‘ pens and heads, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas.’ Others were, ‘ as fast reading, trying all things.’ Milton asks, ‘ What could a man require more from a nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge?’ He truly answers: ‘ Wise and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a nation of prophets, sages, and worthies.’* The ‘ wise and faithful labourers ’ were scarcely to be found in the civil and ecclesiastical violence of these partisan writers. But they were the pioneers of constitutional liberty; and till that fabric was built up, literature, properly so called, would offer few things great or enduring. The demand for books in that stormy period was, doubtless, very limited. The belief that the *Εικὼν Βασιλική* was written by Charles I. would naturally account for the sale of fifty editions in one year. But from 1623 to 1664 only two editions of Shakspeare were sold; and when the Restoration came, an act of

* Areopagitica.

Parliament was passed that only twenty printers should practise their art in the kingdom. The fact, as recorded by Evelyn, that at the fire of London, in 1666, the booksellers who carried on their business in the neighbourhood of St. Paul's lost as many books, in quires, as were worth 200,000*l.*, is rather a proof of a slow demand than of the enormous extent of bookselling. In the vaults of Saint Faith's were rotting many a copy of what the world has agreed to call 'heavy' books; books in advance of their time; books that no price would have made largely saleable—the books for the few.

The terrible quarter of a century that had preceded the Restoration, and the new tastes which the return of the Stuarts brought to England, would seem to have swept away even the remembrances of the popular literature of Elizabeth and James. Edward Phillips, the nephew of Milton, has a remarkable passage with reference to the poets: 'As for the antiquated and fallen into obscurity from their former credit and reputation, they are for the most part those who have written beyond the verge of the present age; for let us look back as far as about thirty or forty years, and we shall find a profound silence of the poets beyond that time, except of some few dramatics, of whose real worth the interest of the now flourishing stage cannot but be sensible.*' This was written in 1674. What had the people to read who had forgotten Spenser, and Daniel, and Drayton, and Herbert; who knew little of Shakspeare, except in the translations of D'Avenant and Dryden; and who, unquestionably, had small relish for the popular prose of another age, such as Bacon's 'Essays'? They had rhyming tragedies; they had obscene comedies; they had their Sedleys and Rochesters. It is not wonderful that the popular taste soon grew corrupted. Pepys says (1666), 'To Deptford by water, reading Othello, Moor of Venice, which I ever heretofore esteemed a mighty good play; but having so lately read The Adventures of

* *Theatrum Poetarum*, Preface.

Five Hours, it seems a mean thing.' Their 'light reading' was a marvel—that romance literature which at one time was as popular in its degree as the shilling novel of our own day. We have before us Mr. Samuel Speed's Catalogue of Books, printed for him in 1670. The first is 'Pharamond, the famed Romance, written by the author of those other two eminent volumes, Cassandra and Cleopatra.' These famed and eminent volumes are large folios, translated from the French of M. de la Calprenede. If Calprenede was the Dumas, Madeleine Scudery was the Eugène Sue of those days. No popularity that these moderns have obtained by their *feuilletons* could have exceeded the excitement produced here, as well as in France, by the wonderful folios of their predecessors. 'Artamenes' and 'Clelia,' to say nothing of 'Almahide' and 'The Illustrious Bassa,' were in every mansion of the ladies of quality. The matron and her daughters sat at their embroidery while the companion read aloud, night after night, a page or two of these interminable adventures, in which Greeks and Romans talked the language of the *Grand Monarque*; and the intrigues of the court, and the characters of its personages, were mysteriously shadowed forth in what were called 'Portraits.' What signified that they were stupid? They were as level to the comprehension of their high-born readers as the penny novels of the present day are to the intelligence of the factory-girl. They had a long popularity, and were reprinted again and again, in their eight or ten volumes, when the age of duodecimos had arrived. They had been fashionable, and that was enough. Character they had none, and very little of human passions. They were constructed upon the admirable recipe of Molière in the 'Précieuses Ridicules'—a lover without feeling; a mistress without preference; mutual insensibility; sedulous attention to forms; a declaration in a garden; the banishment of the lover by the coquetting fair; perseverance; timid confessions; rivals; persecutions of fathers; jealousies conceived under false appearances; laments; despairs; abductions; and all

that. Mammās thought they were wisely instructing their daughters, when they permitted *Mademoiselle Scudery* to teach them ‘des règles dont, en bonne galanterie, on ne saurait se dispenser.’ In vain *Molière*, and *Boileau*, and *Scarron* laughed at the great heroic romances. They held their own till *Le Sage* in France, and *Defoe* and *Fielding* in England, spoke the language of real life. They show us how long the great and little vulgar will feed upon husks, till some real fruit is offered to them. But it is remarkable how, in the same age, works of real genius and works of intense dulness will run side by side. It may be a question how far ‘*Don Quixote*’ drove out the romances of chivalry. ‘*Tartufe*,’ and ‘*Le Malade Imaginaire*’ were of the same era as that of the wonderful productions in which *Cyrus* was talking *galanterie* to *Maudane* through a thousand folio pages. When *Pepys* thought ‘*Othello*’ a mean thing compared with ‘*The Adventures of Five Hours*,’ he also bought ‘*Hudibras*,’ both parts, the book now in greatest fashion for drollery; but he tells us his honest mind when he says, ‘I cannot, I confess, see enough where the wit lies.’ *Voltaire* had a different standard of taste when he wrote, ‘I never met with so much wit in one single book as in this.’ The politics of ‘*Hudibras*’ made it ‘in greatest fashion;’ the wit shot over the heads of the idle, dissipated, slavish, and corrupt courtiers who gave it their patronage, but eventually left its author to starve. *Butler* became popular in another generation; and so did *Milton*. The first edition of ‘*Paradise Lost*’ sufficed for a circulation of seven years.

The earliest Catalogue of Books published in this country contains a list of ‘all the books printed in England since the dreadful fire, 1666, to the end of Trinity term, 1680.’ The statistical results of this catalogue of the productions of the press for fourteen years have been ascertained by us. The whole number of books printed was 3550; of which 947 were divinity, 420 law, and 153 physic; 397 were school-books, and 253 on subjects of

geography and navigation, including maps. About one-half of these books were single sermons and tracts. Deducting the reprints, pamphlets, single sermons, and maps, we have estimated that, upon an average, 100 new books were produced in each year.

About the time when this catalogue was published, John Dunton, one of the most eccentric, and perhaps therefore amusing, of the publishing race, went into business with half a shop. He can tell us something of the manufacture of some of these books of the London catalogue. He says,



Dunton.

‘Printing was now uppermost in my thoughts; and hackney authors began to ply me with specimens as earnestly, and with as much passion and concern, as the watermen do passengers with oars and scullers.’ He adds, ‘As for their honesty, ’tis very remarkable. They’ll either persuade you to go upon another man’s copy, to steal his thought, or to abridge his books which should have got him bread for his lifetime.’* There were varieties of this

* Dunton’s ‘Life and Errors,’ ed. 1705, p. 70.

class :—‘ Mr. Bradshaw was the best accomplished hackney author I have met with ; his genius was quite above the common size, and his style was incomparably fine.’ Dunton had a suspicion that Bradshaw wrote ‘ The Turkish Spy,’ which might justify somewhat of his eulogium. Roger North says that ‘ the demi-booksellers,’ who deal in ‘ the fresh scum of the press,’ are such as ‘ crack their brains to find out selling subjects, and keep hirelings in garrets, at hard meat, to write and correct by the great ; and so puff up an octavo to a sufficient thickness, and there is six shillings current for an hour and a half’s reading, and perhaps never to be read or looked upon after.’ The people get these wares cheaper now. The publishers of that day, and long afterwards, were not very nice as to the uniform excellence of the books they issued. Dunton informs us that Mr. William Rogers, who was the publisher of Sherlock and Tillotson, was concerned in publishing ‘ some Dying Speeches.’ They had books for all tastes, and carried their goods to many markets. They were equally at home in Cheapside or at Stourbridge fair ; and the great Bernard Lintot exhibited his ‘ rubric posts’ in his shop, and kept a booth on the Thames when it was frozen over. Some, according to Dunton, were ‘ pirates and cormorants ;’ others, who had ‘ the intimate acquaintance of several excellent pens, could never want copies.’ Some were good at ‘ projection’—the devisers of ‘ selling subjects ;’ and the talent of some ‘ lies at collection,’ which Dunton exemplifies by Mr. Crouch, who ‘ melted down the best of our English histories into twelvepenny books, which are filled with wonders, rarities, and curiosities.’ One, who ‘ printed The Flying Post, did often fill it with stolen copies ;’ whilst Jacob Tonson, who paid Dryden like a safe tradesman as he was, and made him presents of melons and sherry, is very indignant that the great poet charged him fifty guineas for fourteen hundred and forty-six lines, when he expected to have had fifteen hundred and eighteen lines for forty guineas. Peace to their manes ! They were all doing something towards the

supply of that great want which was beginning to assert itself somewhat extensively in their day. They were, for the most part, rugged dealers in wares intellectual. They had many modes of turning a penny beyond the profits which they derived, as publishers, from 'the great genius,' or 'the eminent hand,' which each patronised. They had some difficulties in their way as manufacturers; although the more cautious and lucky did make fortunes. The more limited the public, the more uncertain the demand. They were pretty safe with their tracts, and their abridg-



Tonson.

ments, and their new comedies; but when they had to deal with works of learning, which were necessarily costly, they and their authors—for the authors had often to sustain the charges of printing—encountered serious losses. We shall see how, as the commerce of books extended, new measures were adopted to lessen, if not to remove, the risk.

Amongst the 'Calamities of Authors' there are many touching records of

'Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty,'

produced by printing books that met with no ready sale. Purchas was ruined by his 'Pilgrimes;' Castell by his 'Lexicon Heptaglotton;' Ockley by his 'History of the Saracens;' Rushworth by his 'Historical Collections.' Bishop Kennett gave away his 'Register and Chronicle,' saying, 'The volume, too large, brings me no profit.' The remedy was to be found in publishing by subscription. This plan, like most other human things, was subject to abuse; but it was founded upon a true estimate of the peculiar risks of publishing. It is manifest that, if a certain number of persons unite in agreement to purchase a book which is about to be printed, the author may be at ease with regard to the issue of the enterprise, and the subscribers ought to receive what they want at a lower cost than when risk enters into price. For more than half a century nearly all the great books were published by subscription; and the highest in literature felt no degradation in canvassing themselves with their 'subscription receipts.' It is easy to perceive, by the subscription prices, when the work was set on foot by an author, or his friends, simply as a more convenient mode of obtaining or bestowing money than begging or borrowing; and when there was a real market value given for the commodity offered. The scheme of levying contributions upon subscribers was as old as the days of Taylor, the Water-Poet. He published his 'Pennilesse Pilgrimage' in this fashion; and it seems that he sometimes gave his books to those who were unwilling to return his honorarium. He consoles himself by a lampoon against his false subscribers:—

'They took a book worth twelvepence, and were bound
To give a crown, an angel, or a pound;
A noble, piece, or half-piece, what they list,—
They past their words, or freely set their fist.'

Honest John had sixteen hundred and fifty such subscribers; but of these, seven hundred and fifty were 'bad debtors.*' In the next century, Myles Davies has the same story to tell of the degradation of the literary begging-letter writer. He leaves his books at the great man's door; he writes letter upon letter, 'with fresh odes upon his graceship, and an account where I lived, and what noblemen had accepted of my present.' He walks before the 'parlour-window,' and 'advances to address his grace to remember the poor author.' At last his parcel of books is returned to him unopened, 'with half-a-guinea upon top of the cargo,' and 'with desire to receive no more.' Heaven, in its mercy, has relieved the tribe from these heartbreaking disgraces. There may be 'the fear that kills,' but there is no longer the patron who starves. Goldsmith has described the devices and the abasement of the little man in the coffee-house, who 'drew out a bundle of proposals, begging me to subscribe to a new edition he was going to give the world of Propertius, with notes.' His plans were more ingenious and diversified than those of Myles Davies: 'I first besiege their hearts with flattery, and then pour in my proposals at the breach. If they subscribe readily the first time, I renew my request to beg a dedication fee. If they let me have that, I smite them once more for engraving their coat-of-arms at the top.' Forty years after Myles Davies, Samuel Johnson was enduring the anxieties attendant upon the subscription plan, although friends stood between the author and the customer. He writes to Burney in 1758, 'I have likewise enclosed twelve receipts (for Shakspeare); not that I mean to impose upon you the trouble of pushing them with more importunity than may seem proper,' &c. Long was the subscribed Shakspeare delayed; and the proud struggling man had to bear Churchill's malignity, as well as the reproaches of his own sense of honour:—

'He for subscribers baits his hook,
And takes your cash; but where's the book?'

* 'A Kicksey Winsey.'

Well might Johnson write, in more prosperous times, 'He that asks subscription soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him, defame him.' Johnson and his publishers set no price upon their books, as a gratuity to the author, beyond their common market value. But great men had gone before them, who regulated their subscription-prices by a higher estimate of the value of their works. Steele had received a guinea an octavo volume for the republication of 'The Tatler;' Pope had six guineas for his six quarto volumes of 'The Iliad;'—'a sum,' says Johnson, 'according to the value of money at that time, by no means inconsiderable.' The subscription to Pope's 'Shakspeare' was also six guineas for six volumes. Johnson's projected translation of Paul Sarpi's 'History of the Council of Trent' was only to be charged twopence a sheet. That seems to have been the ordinary price of subscription books during the first half of the eighteenth century. Du Halde's 'China,' which appears to have required a great deal of what 'the trade' call 'pushing,' was advertised by Cave at three-halfpence a sheet; besides the attraction of a complicated lottery-scheme, with marvellous prizes. When the subscribers to a new book were served, the remaining copies were sold, generally at superior rates. Sometimes, in the case of high-priced works, the unsold copies lay quiet through the mildew of a quarter of a century in the bookseller's warehouse. At Tonson's sale, in 1767, Pope's six-guinea Shakspeare had fallen to sixteen shillings for the hundred and forty copies then sold as a 'remainder.'* Many of the subscription books were remarkably profitable. The gains of Pope upon his 'Iliad' are minutely recorded in his Life by Johnson. Lintot paid the expense of the subscription copies, and gave the poet two hundred pounds a volume in addition. Lintot looked for his remuneration to an edition in folio. The project was knocked on the head by a reprint in Holland, in duodecimo; which edition was clandestinely imported,

* 'Gentleman's Magazine,' vol. lvii., quoted in Nicholls' 'Literary Anecdotes,' vol. v. p. 597.

as in the recent days of French editions of Byron and Scott. Lintot took a wise course. He went at once to the general public with editions in duodecimo, at half-a-crown a volume, of which he very soon sold seven thousand five hundred copies. But it may well be doubted if Pope would have made five thousand three hundred pounds, if he had originally gone, without the quarto subscription process, to the buyers of duodecimos. Perhaps even the duodecimos would not have sold extensively without the reputation of the quartos. There was no great reading public to make a fortune for the poet out of small profits upon large sales. Some may think that Pope would have been as illustrious without the ease which this fortune gave him. It may be so. But of one thing we are clear—that in every age the higher rewards of authorship, reaped by one eminent individual, are benefits to the great body of authors; and thus that the villa at Twickenham had a certain influence in making what the world 'called' 'Grub-street' less despicable and more thriving. It dissociated authorship from garrets. Yet it is marvellous, even now, how some of the race of attorneys and stockbrokers turn up their eyes when they hear of a successful writer keeping a brougham, and lament, over their claret, that such men will be improvident.

In those days of subscription books there were great contrasts of success and loss; of steady support and capricious neglect. Conyers Middleton made a little fortune by his 'Life of Cicero,' in two volumes quarto, published in 1741. His suspected heterodoxy was no bar to his success. Carte, in 1747, printed three thousand copies of the first volume of his 'General History of England,' for which he had adequate support. In that unlucky volume his Jacobitism peeped out, in a relation of an astonishing cure for the king's-evil, produced by the touch of the first Pretender, who, he says, 'had not at that time been crowned or anointed.' Away went the 'remainder' of the three thousand volumes to the trunk-maker, and of the subsequent volumes only seven hundred and fifty were printed.

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Whether by subscription, or by the mode of fixing a published price for a general sale,—which, in the second half of the century, was superseding the attempt to ascertain the number of purchasers before publication,—there was always a great amount of caprice, or prejudice, in the unripe public judgment of a book, which rendered its fate very hazardous and uncertain. Hume, in 1754, published the first volume of his ‘History of England.’ He says, ‘Mr. Millar told me that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it.’ Gibbon published the first volume of his ‘Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire’ in 1776: ‘I am at a loss,’ he modestly tells us, ‘how to describe the success of the work without betraying the vanity of the writer. The first impression was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand; and the bookseller’s property was twice invaded by the pirates of Dublin.’ Thomson’s ‘Seasons’ was lying as waste paper in the publisher’s shop, when one Mr. Whatley purchased a copy; and his authority in the coffee-houses brought it into notice. Collins was not so fortunate. His ‘Odes’ would not sell. He repaid the bookseller the price he had received for the copyright, settled for the printing, and burnt the greater part of the impression.

We have put together some of these scattered facts, to show how difficult was the publication of books before a great general public had been raised up to read and purchase, and how the risk of expensive works was sought to be lessened by taking hostages against evil fortune. The subdivision of large books into weekly or monthly numbers was one of the expedients that was early resorted to for attracting purchasers. Some curious relations of the first days of number-publishing are given in a rare pamphlet by the Rev. Thomas Stackhouse, the author of the well-known ‘History of the Bible.’ In 1732 two booksellers, Mr. Wilford and Mr. Edlin, ‘when the success of some certain things published weekly set every little bookseller’s wits to work,’ proposed to this poor curate of Finchley ‘to write something which might be published weekly, but what it was

they knew not.' At the Castle Tavern, in Paternoster Row, the trio deliberated upon the 'something' that was to have a run. Edlin was for a 'Roman History, brushing up Ozell's dull style, when the old thing would still do in a weekly manner.' Wilford was for 'Family Directors.' Stackhouse proposed the 'New History of the Bible.' Wilford backed out; Edlin and Stackhouse quarrelled. The divine wanted many works of commentators and critics. The bookseller maintained 'that the chief of his subscribers lived in Southwark, Wapping, and Ratcliff Highway; that they had no notion of critics and commentators; that the work would be adapted to their capacity, and therefore the less learning in it the better.' Stackhouse got out of the hands of this encourager of letters, found another publisher, and prospered, as well as he could, upon the subscriptions to his 'four sheets of original matter for sixpence.*' Many of the number-books were published under fictitious names of authors; and some actual authors, clerical and lay, lent their names to works of which they never saw a line. One of the most accomplished of the number-book writers was Dr. Robert Sanders, a self-created LL.D. He produced Histories of England, in folio and quarto, under various names. He was the writer of the Notes to the edition of the Bible, published in 1773, under the honoured name of Dr. Henry Southwell. The ingenious note-writer, has told the story without reservation:—'As I was not a clergyman, my name could not be prefixed to it. Application was made to several clergymen for the use of their names; and at last Henry Southwell, LL.D., granted his.' In a year or two the indefatigable Sanders was ready with a scheme for a larger commentary. He found a Doctor who would lend his name for a hundred pounds; but such a sum was out of the question. A mere A.M. was purchased for twenty pounds; but the affair broke down. The commentator relates that he was told by the proprietors 'they had no further occasion for my services, and even

* See Nicholls' 'Literary Anecdotes,' vol. ii. p. 394.

denied me my week's wages.' We hope the laborious Sanders was less scurvily treated by the publishers of that immortal work of his, which has been the glory of the number-trade even up to this hour, namely, 'The Newgate Calendar, or Malefactor's Bloody Register.' How many fortunes have been made out of this great storehouse of popular knowledge is of little consequence to society. It may be of importance to consider how many imps of fame have here studied the path to glory. Sanders had a rival—the Rev. Mr. Villette, ordinary of Newgate—who published the 'Annals of Newgate, or Malefactor's Register,' &c., 'intended as a beacon to warn the rising generation against the temptations, the allurements, and the dangers of bad company.' In this title-page 'the celebrated John Sheppard,' and 'the equally celebrated Margaret Caroline Rudd,' are leading attractions. The author of the 'Annals,' no doubt, prospered better than he of the 'Calendar.'

Poor wretched Sanders, during the period when he was correcting Lord Lyttleton's 'History of Henry II.,' had 'a weekly subsistence;' but in 1768 he writes, 'During these six weeks I have not tasted one whole meal of victuals at a time.*' The original race of number-publishers had no very exalted notion of the value of literary labour. Their successors had no will to bestow any payment upon literature at all, while they had the old stores to produce and reproduce. They have now been forced into some few attempts at originality. But the employment of new authorship is a rare exception to their ordinary course. When the necessity does arise, there is always perturbation of mind. In a moment of despair, when his press was standing still for some of that manuscript which, in an unlucky hour, he had bargained for with a living writer, one of this fraternity exclaimed, 'Give me dead authors, they never keep you waiting for copy!' Many good books have, however, been produced by the early number-publishers. We may mention Chambers' 'Cyclopædia,' Smollett's 'History

* Nicholls' 'Literary Anecdotes,' vol. ii. p. 730, and vol. iii. p. 760.

of England,' and Scott's 'Bible.' Some well-printed books are still being produced, but the compilers help themselves freely to what others have dearly paid for. Taken as a whole, they are the least improved, and certainly they are the dearest books, in the whole range of popular literature. The system upon which they are sold is essentially that of forcing a sale; and the necessary cost of this forcing, called 'canvassing,' is sought to be saved in the quantity of the article 'canvassed,' or in the less obvious degradation of its quality. The 'canvasser' is an universal genius, and he must be paid as men of genius ought to be paid. He has to force off the commonest of wares by the most ingenious of devices. It is not the intrinsic merit of a book that is to command a sale, but the exterior accomplishments of the salesman. He adapts himself to every condition of person with whom he is thrown into contact. As in Birmingham and other great towns there is a beggars' register, which describes the susceptibilities of the families at whose gates beggars call, even to the particular theological opinions of the occupants, so the canvasser has a pretty accurate account of the households within his beat. He knows where there is the customer in the kitchen, and the customer in the parlour. He sometimes has a timid colloquy with the cook in the passage; sometimes takes a glass of ale in the servants' hall; and, when he can rely upon the charms of his address, sends his card boldly into the drawing-room. No refusal can prevent him in the end leaving his number for inspection. The system is most rife in North and Midland England; it is not so common in the agricultural South, although it might be an instrument of diffusing sound knowledge amongst a scattered population. If an effort were honestly made to publish works really cheap, because intrinsically good, upon 'the canvassing system,' that system, which has many real advantages, might be redeemed from the disgrace which now too often attaches to it, in the hands of the quacks who are most flourishing in that line.

The number-trade was a necessary offshoot of that periodical literature which sprang up into importance at

the beginning of the eighteenth century, and which, in all its ramifications, has had a more powerful influence than that of all other literature upon the intelligence of the great body of the people.

SECTION III.

ON the 8th of February, 1696, our friend John Dunton completed the nineteenth volume of 'The Athenian Mercury, resolving all the most nice and curious questions proposed by the ingenious.' This penny tract, published twice a week, consisted of a single leaf. 'The ingenious' ceased to question, and 'The Athenian Society,' as the bookseller called his scribes, ceased to answer, after six years of this oracular labour. There came an irruption of the barbarians, in the shape of 'nine newspapers every week.' John proposed to resume his task 'as soon as the glut of news is a little over.' The countryman waiting for the river to roll by was not more mistaken. In 1709 there was one daily paper in London; twelve, three times a week; and three, twice a week. Amongst those of three times a week was 'The Tatler,' which commenced April 12, 1709. The early Tatlers had their regular foreign intelligence. They were as much newspapers as 'The Flying Post' and 'The Postboy.' But Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., very soon discontinued the information which he derived from letters from the Hague and advices from Berlin. He had something of a more original character to offer his readers. The state of popular enlightenment at this period has been described by Johnson in his Life of Addison:— 'That general knowledge which now circulates in common talk was in his time rarely to be found. Men not professing learning were not ashamed of ignorance; and in the female world any acquaintance with books was distinguished only to be censured.' Steele and Addison had to form the taste of the new generation that they were addressing. They knew that there was a large class craving

amusement, who might at the same time be refined and instructed without the pretensions of 'the budge doctors of the stoic fur.' They meddled little with politics. They left the furious discussions about Church and State to papers with an earnest political purpose, of which Charles Leslie, a violent Tory, thus spoke in his 'Rehearsals':—'The greatest part of the people do not read books; most of them cannot read at all: but they will gather together about one that can read, and listen to an *Observer* or *Review*, as I have seen them, in the streets.' The *Tatler* has been described as a great success; but we may measure that success by that of the more popular *Spectator*. In No. 555 of that work Steele says,—'The tax on each half-sheet has brought into the Stamp-Office, one week with another, above 20*l.* a week, arising from the single paper, notwithstanding it at first reduced it to less than half the number that was usually printed before the tax was laid.' The tax being a penny, this would only show a daily circulation of 1600, and of about 3000 when it was unstamped. But the sale in volumes, according to the same statement, was as high as 9000 of each volume. This fact gives us a higher notion of the popularity of these charming papers, and of the consequent extent of general reading, than any other circumstance in the literary history of that period. But even the comparatively small daily sale was of importance, as showing that the great middle class was beginning to seek something better than could be found in the coarse and meagre news-sheets. The annals of 'The Gentlemen's Society at Spalding' record that in April, 1709, some residents there heard of the *Tatlers*, and ordered them to be sent to the coffee-house in the Abbey-yard:—'They were accordingly had, and read there every post-day, generally aloud to the company, who could sit and talk over the subject afterwards.' The narrative goes on to say that 'in March, 1711, the *Spectator* came out, which was received and read here as the *Tatler* had been.' Such are the beginnings of popular knowledge. What the *Tatler* and *Spectator*

were to the gentlemen of Spalding, the Penny Magazine and Chambers' Journal were to many a mechanic a hundred and twenty years after. One of this class has recorded the influence of such works, which addressed a far larger number than could be addressed at the beginning of the eighteenth century :—'The Penny Magazine was published. I borrowed the first volume, and determined to make an effort to possess myself with the second. Accordingly, with January, 1833, I determined to discontinue the use of sugar in my tea, hoping that my family would not then feel the sacrifice necessary to buy the book. . . . I looked as anxiously for the issue of the monthly part as I did for the means of getting a living.* It is this spirit in the great mechanical class of this country that, in spite of some popular reading that is corrupting, and much that is frivolous, will ultimately raise and purify even the meanest sheet of our cheap literature, and compel those who have the responsibility of addressing large masses of the people to understand that an influential portion do feel that the acquirement of knowledge is worth some sacrifice.

The 'Complete Catalogue of Modern Books, published from the beginning of the century to 1756,' contains 5280 new works. In this Catalogue 'all pamphlets and other tracts' are excluded. We can scarcely, therefore, compare this period, as to the number of books published, with that of 1680. The average number of the first fifty-seven years of the eighteenth century was ninety-three new works each year. At the beginning of the century, the price of a folio or quarto volume ranged from 10s. to 12s.; an octavo from 5s. to 6s.; and a duodecimo from 2s. 6d. to 3s. We have the original 'Tatler' before us, with its curious advertisements of books, sales by the candle, cordial elixirs, lotteries, and bohea tea at 24s. a pound. White-locke's 'Memorials,' folio, is advertised at 12s.; Rowe's edition of Shakspeare, 8vo., is 5s. per volume; 'The Peerage of England,' 8vo., 6s.; Shakspeare's Poems, 12mo.,

* 'Autobiography of an Artisan.' By Christopher Thomson. 1847.

1s. 6d.; 'The Monthly Amusement,' each number containing a complete novel, is 1s.; Sermons are 2d. each. We learn, from other sources, that the first edition of 'The Dunciad' was a sixpenny pamphlet; whilst 'The Governor of Cyprus, a Novel,' and 'The Wanton Fryar, a Novel,' were each 12s. The number printed of an edition was, no doubt, very moderate, except chiefly of books that were associated with some great popular excitement. Sacheverell's Trial is said to have sold 30,000; as, in a later period, 30,000 were sold of Burke's 'Reflections on the Revolution in France.' The old booksellers were cautious about works of imagination when they were expected to pay handsomely for copyright. The manuscript of 'Robinson Crusoe' was pronounced dangerous by the whole tribe of publishers, till one ventured upon an edition. The demand was such that the copies could only be supplied by dividing the work amongst several printers. One of Defoe's numerous assailants, in attempting to ridicule him, gives the best evidence of his popularity: 'There is not an old woman that can go to the price of it but buys "The Life and Adventures," and leaves it as a legacy with the "Pilgrim's Progress."' Richardson's 'Pamela,' published in 1741, sold five editions in one year. There are fabulous accounts of Millar, the publisher, clearing 18,000*l.* by 'Tom Jones.' In those times the Dublin pirates were as assiduous in their plunder of English copyrights as the American publishers have been in plundering the English, and the English the American, in our days. Richardson was driven wild by the publication of half 'Sir Charles Grandison' in Ireland, in a cheap form, before a single volume was issued in England. There was a regular system of bribery in the English printing-offices, through which the Dublin booksellers organised their robberies. They sold their books surreptitiously in England and Scotland; and from their greater cheapness they had the command of their own market. This system lasted till the Union.

The prices of books do not appear to have much in-

creased at the beginning of the reign of George III. In some cases their moderation is remarkable. We have seen how small was the demand for the first volume of Hume's 'History' in 1754. We have a number of 'The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser' at hand, May 9, 1764; and there we learn, from an advertisement, what a change ten years had produced. A new edition of the third and fourth volumes, in quarto, is advertised at 1*l.* 5*s.*; but 'the proprietor, at the desire of many who wish to be possessed of this valuable and esteemed history, is induced to a monthly publication, which will not exceed eight volumes.' These volumes were 5*s.* each. It is manifest that the bookseller had found a new class to address when he issued the monthly volumes. Hume says, 'Notwithstanding the variety of winds and seasons to which my writings had been exposed, they had still been making such advances that the copy-money given me by the booksellers much exceeded anything formerly known in England.' He had complained of the neglect of the 'considerable for rank or letters.' His publisher saw that a history with such charms of style—so freed from tedious quotations from state papers and statutes—so unlike the great folios of Carte and Rapin—was a book for a new race of readers. Coleridge humorously enough says—'Poets and philosophers, rendered diffident by their very number, addressed themselves to "learned readers;" then, aimed to conciliate the graces of "the candid reader;" till, the critic still rising as the author sank, the amateurs of literature collectively were erected into a municipality of judges, and addressed as "the Town." And now, finally, all men being supposed to read, and all readers able to judge, the multitudinous "Public," shaped into personal unity by the magic of abstraction, sits nominal despot on the throne of criticism.*' There is a great truth beneath the sarcasm. The enduring patronage of the public was beginning when Andrew Millar was bold enough to publish

* 'Biographia Literaria,' vol. i. p. 60, ed. 1817

Hume's History in monthly five-shilling volumes. But there are still many evidences that the commerce of books at that period, and subsequently, did not contemplate the existence of a large class of buyers, beyond those who were at ease in their fortunes. In that farrago of sense and absurdity, 'The Life of James Lackington, the present



Lackington.

Bookseller, Finsbury-square, London, written by himself' (1791), there is a remarkable disclosure of the mode in which books were prevented being sold cheaply, after the original demand had been satisfied:—'When first invited to these trade-sales, I was very much surprised to learn that it was common for such as purchased remainders to destroy one-half or three-fourths of such books, and to charge the full publication price, or nearly that, for such as they kept on hand. And there was a kind of standing order amongst the trade that, in case any one was known to sell articles under the publication price, such a person was to be excluded from trade-sales—so blind were copy-

right holders to their own interest.' In the same manner, it is within the memory of many living persons that there was an invariable high price for fish in London, because the wholesale dealers at Billingsgate always destroyed a portion of what came to market, if the supply were above the average. The dealers in fish had not recognised the existence of a class who would buy for their suppers what the rich had not taken for their dinners; and knew not that the stalls of Tottenham Court Road had as many customers ready for a low price as the shops of Charing Cross for a high price. The fishmongers had not discovered that the price charged to the evening customers had no effect of lowering that of the morning. Nor had the booksellers discovered that there were essentially two, if not more, classes of customers for books—those who would have the dearest and the newest, and those who were content to wait till the gloss of novelty had passed off, and good works became accessible to them, either in cheaper reprints, or 'remainders' reduced in price. But books and fish have one material difference. Good books are not impaired in value when they are cheapened. Their character, which has been established by the first demand, creates a second and a larger demand. Lackington destroyed no books that were worth saving, but sold them as he best could. We have no quarrel with his self-commendation when he says, 'I could almost be vain enough to assert that I have thereby been highly instrumental in diffusing that general desire for reading now so prevalent among the inferior orders of society.'

What Lackington thought 'a general desire for reading' was, nevertheless, a very limited desire. 'The inferior orders of society' who had the desire did not comprehend many of the mechanics, and none of the husbandry labourers. It may be doubted whether the Magazine Literature that the eighteenth century called forth ever went beyond the gentry and the superior traders. Kippis says of the magazines, 'they have been the means of diffusing a general habit of reading through the nation.' There appears to

have been a sort of tacit agreement amongst all who spoke of public enlightenment in the days of George III. to put out of view the great body of 'the nation' who paid for their bread by their weekly wages. The magazines were certainly never addressed to this class. But for the general book-buyers of the time, Cave's project of 'The Gentleman's Magazine' was a great step in popular literature. The booksellers would not join him in what they held to be a risk. When he had succeeded, and sold 10,000, then they set up the rival 'London Magazine.' Cave threw all his energy into the magazine, and was rewarded. 'He scarcely ever looked out of the window, but with a view to its improvement,' said Johnson. 'The Gentleman's Magazine' commenced in 1731. Then came, year after year, magazines 'as plenty as blackberries:—' 'The London,' 'The Universal,' 'The Literary,' 'The Royal,' 'The Complete,' 'The Town and Country,' 'The Ladies,' 'The Westminster,' 'The European,' 'The Monthly.' The first popular review, 'The Monthly,' was published in 1749, and 'The Critical' in 1756. The public were now firmly established as the real patrons of letters. There was an end of poor authors knocking at great men's doors with a bundle of books. There was an end to paid Dedications and gratulatory Odes. Johnson could afford to launch his Dictionary without the help of the Earl of Chesterfield. Hume became 'not only independent but opulent' through the 'copy-money' of the booksellers.

The publication of Collections of the Poets was another proof of the extension of the reading public. The man who first projected such a Collection went for cheapness. In 1777 John Bell announced an edition of 'The Poets of Great Britain; complete from Chaucer to Churchill.' The London booksellers, to the number of forty, held a meeting, to resist what they considered an invasion of their literary property—some works within the time of the statute of Anne being legally theirs—others their copyright by courtesy. They resolved to combine their various interests; and they produced that edition of the Poets, in sixty-eight volumes,

which is called Johnson's, though, according to Malone, he never saw a line of the text. The 'Lives,' which Johnson wrote for two hundred guineas, will endure as a great classic work, however deformed by hasty or prejudiced judgment. Many of the Poets given in the series have no pretension to be looked upon again, except as a part of literary history, which may show how the most feeble may attain reputation in an age of mediocrity. The booksellers spoke contemptuously of Bell's edition, which they called 'trifling.' They boasted their superior printing; but they gave no place in their Collection to Chaucer, Spenser, or Donne, as Bell had done. They did not care to direct the public taste;—they printed what they thought would sell. The demand for such Collections has always been one of the proofs of a healthy condition of public intelligence; but the want has not often been supplied with any judgment beyond that of the rude commercial estimate of the prevailing fashion in poetry. It is extremely difficult to deal with such matters. All literary students have a proper horror of abridgments and analyses. They want all of an author, or none. You can neither make Chaucer extremely popular by an entire reprint, nor command a large sale by partial extract. But John Bell was right, in 1777, to risk the printing of three great early poets, whilst the booksellers began with Waller. Here were poets that can never be wholly obsolete. But the rubbish called poetry that found its way, by trade preferences, into Johnson's edition—the inanities of the drivellers between Pope and Gray—let not these be reproduced in our time, when such Collections are coming again into fashion, and showing, as they showed before, an extension of readers.

The Circulating Library—what a revolution was that in popular literature! How this new plant appeared above the earth, where it first budded, where it bore its early fruit—how it grew into a great tree, like that in the old title to Lilly's Grammar, where the apples of knowledge are being gathered by little climbing-boys—would be difficult to trace and to record. There it was—this great economiser

of individual outlay for books—in most market-towns at the beginning of the century. The universal adoption of the name is the best proof of the common recognition of the idea. It changed the habits of the old country booksellers. It found them other occupation than keeping a stall in the market-place, as did their worthy forefathers. They dealt no longer in tracts and single sermons. It sent the chap-books into the villages. It made the ‘Seven Champions of Christendom’ and ‘The Wise Masters of Greece’ vulgar. It created a new literature of fiction. It banished ‘Robinson Crusoe’ to the kitchen, and ‘The Arabian Nights’ to the nursery. It built up great printing-houses in Leadenhall-street; and held out high rewards for rapid composition, at the rate of five pounds per volume, to decayed governesses who had seen the world, and bank-clerks of an imaginative turn of mind. These could produce a wilderness of Italian bandits, with unlimited wealth and beauty, who had won the hearts of credulous countesses, and only surrendered to the hangman when whole armies came out to take them. These could unveil all the mysterious luxuries of great mansions in Grosvenor-square, or of sumptuous hotels in Bond-street. There was ever and anon a ‘bright particular star’ in the Milky Way of popular fiction. But the circulating library went on its own course, whether the empyrean of romance were dim or brilliant. ‘What have you got new?’ was the universal question put to the guardian of the treasures of this recently-discovered world of letters. When the bower-maid of the luxurious fair one, who lolled upon the sofa through a long summer’s day, as Gray did when he was deep in Crébillon, came to ‘change’ the book, great sometimes was the perplexity. It was not a difficult task to ‘change,’ but the newness was puzzling. The lady and the neat-handed Phillis pursued their studies simultaneously. They did not like ‘poetry;’ they did not like ‘letters.’ ‘Sir Charles Grandison’ was as old and as tiresome as ‘Pamela.’ ‘Tom Jones,’ and ‘Peregrine Pickle;’ they wondered why they were allowed to remain in the catalogue. They had read ‘Cœlebs in search of a Wife’—

the charming book—but they did not want it again. Perhaps, suggested the bookseller's apprentice, 'The Monk' might do once more. And so the circulating library went on, slow and struggling, till, about 1814, the unlucky desire for 'something new' brought down to the little greasy collection, whose delusive numbers of volumes ranged from 1 to 3250, a new novel, with the somewhat unpromising title of 'Waverley, or 'tis Sixty Years since.' At first, the lady upon the sofa, and the counsellor of her studies, could not endure it, for it was full of horrid Scotch. It was often 'at home,' as the phrase went, for six months of its probation; when, somehow, it was discovered that a new book of wonderful talent had come out of the North. Another and another came, and in a few years the old circulating library was ruined. The Burneys, and Edgeworths, and Radcliffes, and Godwins, and Holcrofts, who had mixed with much lower company upon the librarian's shelves, still held a place. But the Winters in London and Winters in Bath, the Midnight Bells, the Nuns, and the Watch-Towers, retired from business. There was then a new epoch in the circulating-library life. The literature of travels and memoirs timidly claimed a place by the side of the fashionable novel, which asserted its dignity by raising its price to a guinea and a half. The old legitimate stupidity, which did very well before the trade was disturbed, would no longer 'circulate.' But the names of the producers of the higher fiction were not 'Legion.' 'Something new' must still be had. To meet the market, every variety of west-end authorship was experimented upon. The number to be printed could be calculated with tolerable exactness, according to the reputation of the writer,—and this calculation regulated the payment of copyright, from fifty pounds. and five hundred printed, to the man without a name, up to fifteen hundred pounds, and an impression of three thousand, to 'the glass of fashion.' But in this department of the commerce of literature,—as it will be in the end with every branch upon which the growth of popular intelligence is operating,—the rubbish is perishable, has perished; the good endureth.

The circulating library is now, in many instances, a real instrument of popular enlightenment. Yet in some of the smaller towns, and in watering-places where raffles have their charm, and a musical performance is patronised in the 'Fancy Repository,' by 'audience fit though few'—there the circulating library may be studied in its ancient brilliancy. There, are still preserved, with a paper number on their brown leather backs, and a well-worn bill of the terms of subscription on their sides, those volumes, now fading into oblivion, whence the writers of many a penny journal of fiction are drawing and will still draw their inspiration. Many of these relics of a past age will live over again in shilling volumes with new titles. The heroes and heroines will change their names; the furniture of the apartments in which they utter their vows of love will be modernised; every sentence which in the slightest degree approaches the vulgar will be softened down or obliterated. There is a great deal yet to be done in this way; and the metamorphosis will go on and prosper. In the meanwhile the circulating libraries, both in London and the provinces, are supporting a higher literature of fiction than those of the past generation; and they find also that there are other volumes almost as attractive as the last new novel. They are doing the same work as the book-clubs. Both these modes of co-operation have had the effect of making the demand for a book that is at once solid and attractive more certain than the old demand by individual purchasers. The certainty of the demand necessarily produces a gradual reduction of price. An average demand is created, resulting from an average of taste in those who belong to book-societies and subscribe to circulating libraries. But these channels for the sale of new books are not materially influenced by lowness of price. Cheapness is greatly influential with the private purchaser; but very many are content with the reading of a new book, through the club or the library, who would never buy it for their own household. This first demand is one of the means by which good books may be cheapened for a subsequent large issue for the per-

manent home library. In 'The Life of Lackington' there is the following passage :—' I have been informed that, when circulating libraries were first opened, the booksellers were much alarmed ; and their rapid increase added to their fears, and led them to think that the sale of books would be much diminished by such libraries. But experience has proved that the sale of books, so far from being diminished by them, has been greatly promoted ; as from these repositories many thousand families have been cheaply supplied with books, by which the taste of reading has become much more general, and thousands of books are purchased every year by such as have first borrowed them at those libraries, and, after reading, approving of them, have become purchasers.'

One of the first attempts, and it was a successful one, to establish a cheap Book-Club was made by Robert Burns. He had founded a Society at Tarbolton, called the Bachelors' Club, which met monthly for the purposes of discussion and conversation. But this was a club without books ; for the fines levied upon the members were spent in conviviality. Having changed his residence to Mauchline, a similar club was established there, but with one important alteration :—the fines were set apart for the purchase of books, and the first work bought was 'The Mirror,' by Henry Mackenzie. Dr. Currie, the biographer of Burns, in recording this fact, says, ' With deference to the Conversation Society of Mauchline, it may be doubted whether the books which they purchased were of a kind best adapted to promote the interest and happiness of persons in this situation of life.' The objection of Dr. Currie was founded upon his belief that works which cultivated 'delicacy of taste' were unfitted for those who pursued manual occupations. He qualifies his objection, however, by the remark, that ' Every human being is a proper judge of his own happiness, and within the path of innocence ought to be permitted to pursue it. Since it is the taste of the Scottish peasantry to give a preference to works of taste and of fancy, it may be presumed they find a superior gratification in the perusal of such works.' This truth, timidly put by Dr. Currie,

ought to be the foundation of every attempt to provide books for all readers. We are learning to correct the false opinions which, for a century or two, have been degrading the national character by lowering the general taste. Those who maintained that taste was the exclusive property of the rich and the luxurious, could not take away from the humble the beauty of the rose or the fragrance of the violet; they could not make the nightingale sing a vulgar note to the 'swink'd hedger at his supper;' nor, speaking purely to a question of taste, did they venture to lower the noble translation of the Bible, which they put into the hands of the poor man, to something which, according to the insolent formula of those days, was 'adapted to the meanest capacity.' A great deal of this has passed away. It has been discovered that music is a fitting thing to be cultivated by the people; the doors of galleries are thrown open for the people to gaze upon Raffaelles and Correggios; even cottages are built so as to satisfy a feeling of proportion, and to make their inmates aspire to something like decoration. All this is progress in the right direction.

In the year 1825, Lord Brougham (then Mr. Brougham), in his 'Practical Observations upon the Education of the People,' explained a plan which has yet been only partially acted upon. 'Book-Clubs or Reading Societies may be established by very small numbers of contributors, and require an inconsiderable fund. If the associates live near one another, arrangements may be easily made for circulating the books, so that they may be in use every moment that any one can spare from his work. Here, too, the rich have an opportunity presented to them of promoting instruction without constant interference: the gift of a few books, as a beginning, will generally prove a sufficient encouragement to carry on the plan by weekly or monthly contributions: and, with the gift, a scheme may be communicated to assist the contributors in arranging the plan of their association.' Simple in its working as such a plan would appear to be, the instances of these voluntary associations are really few. In Scotland, Lending Libraries and Itinerating

Libraries have, in some districts, been established successfully ; but in England, Lending Libraries are scarcely to be found, except in connexion with schools, or under the immediate direction of the minister of a parish or of a dissenting congregation. In these cases, we fear, comes too frequently into action the desire, laudable no doubt, to promote 'the interest and happiness of persons in this situation of life.' They are not permitted to choose for themselves. The best books of amusement are kept out of their sight ; and they contrive to get hold of the worst. The timidity which insists upon supplying these libraries with *pattern* books renders the libraries disagreeable, and therefore useless.

THE FIRST NEWSPAPER STAMP.

It is the evening of Monday, the 28th of July, in the year of 1712. Two middle-aged men come out of Will's Coffee-House, and slowly walk through the close lanes that lead to the heart of the City. The one has a brisk and alert step, with an air of frank hilarity in his face, which is somewhat lighted up in the evening sun by the magnum of generous claret which he has been sharing with his friend. The other moves a little unsteadily, with a hesitating step, which is not improved by the wine he has taken; but a placid smile plays on his features, and, in connection with the dignified repose of his whole manner, gives assurance of the gentleman. As they pass along they encounter a bevy of newsvenders, known as hawkers or Mercuries, who are bawling at the top of their lungs, 'Here you have the last number of the *Observer*—the last number—no other number will ever be published, on account of the stamp.' 'Here you have the *Flying Post*, which will go on in spite of the stamp.' 'Here you have the *Spectator*, this day's *Spectator*, all writ by the greatest wits of the age.' The more hilarious of the two friends twitches his companion's arm, and whispers, 'That's at any rate a comfort, Addison.' 'True fame, Steele,' is the reply. Their onward course is to a small printing-office in Little Britain. They climb the narrow staircase, and are in a close and dingy room, with two printing-presses and working spaces for four compositors. A grave man is reading at a desk, and he bows reverently to the gallants in lace and ruffles, who thus honour him by a visit to his dark den of letters.

'Why, Mr. Buckley,' says Steele, 'your narrow passages and close rooms remind me of the printer of Ben Jonson,

who kept his press in a hollow tree. We are come to talk with you about this infernal Stamp : a red Stamp, they tell me, 'tis to be, not black, like its father. Lillie is obstinate, and says our penny Spectator must be raised to twopence; and if so, where are our customers to come from ?

'I was for stopping,' interposes Addison.

'Not so, sir ; not so, I pray,' ejaculates the frightened printer ; 'there isn't such a paper in Town, sir. Goes into the houses of the first of the quality ; not a coffee-house without it. Not like your *Post-boys* and *Posts*, which are read by shopkeepers and handicrafts.'

'I should like to be read by shopkeepers and handicrafts,' says Steele.

'Oh dear, no, sir ; quite impossible, sir. They must have coarse food ; ghosts and murders. Delicate wit like Mr. Addison's, fine morality like Mr. Steele's, are for the Town, sir, not the populace.'

'A nice distinction, truly,' cries Addison ; 'Audience fit, though few.'

'Few, sir ? why, we print three thousand ; and we shall print as many when the stamp doubles our price. Our customers will never stand upon a shilling a week. And, besides, those who support the government will rejoice in the opportunity of paying the tax. I shouldn't wonder if the stamp doubled our sale.'

'Very sanguine, Mr. Buckley.'

'Sanguine, sir ? Who wouldn't be sanguine, when rare wits like you condescend to write for the Town. There is Doctor Swift, too, I hear, has been writing penny paper after penny paper. A fine hand, gentlemen ! Are we to go back to our old ignorant days because of a red stamp ? We must go on improving. Look at my printing-office, and see if *we* are not improved. Why, Sir Roger L'Estrange, when he set up the *Intelligencer* fifty years ago, gave notice that he would publish his one book a week, "to be published every Thursday, and finished upon the Tuesday night, leaving Wednesday entire for the printing it off." And now I, gentlemen—Heaven forbid I should boast,—can

print your *Spectator* off every day, and not even want the copy more than three days before the publication. Think of that, gentlemen, a half-sheet every day! A hundred years hence nobody will believe it.'

'You are a wonderful man, Mr. Buckley, and we are all very grateful to you,' says the laughing-eyed Essayist. 'But, talking of a hundred years hence, who can say that our moral and mechanical improvements are to stop here? I can imagine a time when every handicraft in the country shall read; when the footman behind the carriage shall read; when the Irish chairman shall read; and when your *Intelligencer* shall hear of a great battle on the Wednesday morning, and have a full account of it published on the Thursday.'

'That, sir, with all submission, is actually impossible; and surely you are joking when you talk of the vulgar learning to read, and taking delight in reading. Reading will never go lower than our shopkeepers, I think.'

'I wonder,' interposes Addison, 'what the people would read a hundred years hence, if they had the ability? They must have books especially suited to their capacities.'

'They would read your "Vision of Mirza," and know something about your "Sir Roger de Coverley."'

'Come, come, Diccon, don't be sarcastic. I thought I was pitching my key low enough to suit our fops, and our courtiers, and our coffee-house loungers;—but to be relished by the rabble! A pinch of snuff, if you please.'

'If I could see the day,' replies Steele, 'when we had a nation of readers, and books could circulate rapidly through the whole country, I would leave the Town to mend its follies as it best might, and set up for a teacher of the People. We would make your press do ten times its present work then, Mr. Buckley.'

'Ah, sir, great men like you always have their dreams. I once knew a very clever man who fancied the mail would some time or other go to York in three days. Poor man, he was very nearly mad.'

Addison whispers to his friend that the printer would

number him amongst the Bedlam candidates if he propounded any more of his speculations ; and then, drawing himself up with greater dignity, rejoices the honest printer's heart by a memorable declaration :—‘ Come what may, we shall go on in spite of the Stamp. There, Mr. Buckley, is the copy for No. 445, Thursday, July 31, which announces our resolve. We will not be cashiered by Act of Parliament.’



'The foot grows black that was with dirt embrown'd.'

TRIVIA.

IN one of the many courts on the north side of Fleet Street, might be seen, somewhere about the year 1820, *the last of the ancient shoe-blacks*. One would think that he deemed himself dedicated to his profession by Nature, for he was a Negro. At the earliest dawn he crept forth from his neighbouring lodging, and planted his tripod on the quiet pavement, where he patiently stood till noon was past. He was a short, large-headed, son of Africa, subject, as it would appear, to considerable variations of spirits, alternating between depression and excitement, as the gains of the day presented to him the chance of having a few pence to recreate himself, beyond what he should carry home to his wife and children. For he had a wife and children, this last representative of a falling trade; and two or three little woolly-headed *décrotteurs* nestled around him when he was idle, or assisted in taking off the roughest of the dirt when he had more than one client.

He watched, with a melancholy eye, the gradual improvement of the streets; for during some twenty or thirty years he had beheld all the world combining to ruin him. He saw the foot-pavements widening; the large flag-stones carefully laid down; the loose and broken piece, which discharged a slushy shower on the unwary foot, instantly removed: he saw the kennels diligently cleansed, and the drains widened: he saw experiment upon experiment made in the repair of the carriage-way, and the holes which were to him as the 'old familiar faces' which he loved, filled up with a haste that appeared quite unnecessary, if not insulting. One solitary country shopkeeper, who had come to London once a year during a long life, clung to our sable friend; for he was the only one of the fraternity that he could find remaining, in his walk from Charing Cross to Cheapside. The summer's morning when that good man planted his foot on the three-legged stool, and desired him carefully to turn back his brown gaiters, and asked him how trade went with him, and shook his head when he learned that it was very bad, and they both agreed that new-fangled ways were the ruin of the country—that was a joyful occasion to him, for he felt that he was not quite deserted. He did not continue long to struggle with the capricious world:—

'One morn we miss'd him on th' accustomed stand.'

He retired into the workhouse; and his boys, having a keener eye than their father to the wants of the community, took up the trade which he most hated, and applied themselves to the diligent removal of the mud in an earlier stage of its accumulation—they swept crossings, instead of cleaning shoes.

The last of the ancient Shoe-blacks belongs to history. He was one of the living monuments of *old* London; he was a link between three or four generations. The stand which he *purchased* in Bolt Court (in the wonderful resemblance of external appearance between all these Fleet-Street courts, we cannot be sure that it was *Bolt* Court)

had been handed down from one successor to another, with as absolute a line of customers as Child's Banking-house. He belonged to a trade which has its literary memorials. In 1754, the polite Chesterfield, and the witty Walpole, felt it no degradation to the work over which they presided that it should be jocose about his fraternity, and hold that his profession was more dignified than that of the author :

'Far be it from me, or any of my brother authors, to intend lowering the dignity of the gentlemen trading in black ball, by naming them with ourselves: we are extremely sensible of the great distance there is between us: and it is with envy that we look up to the occupation of shoe-cleaning, while we lament the severity of our fortune, in being sentenced to the drudgery of a less respectable employment. But while we are unhappily excluded from the stool and brush, it is surely a very hard case that the contempt of the world should pursue us, only because we are unfortunate.*

Gay makes 'the black youth'—his mythological descent from the goddess of mud, and his importance in a muddy city—the subject of the longest episode in his amusing Trivia. The shoe-boy's mother thus addresses him :—

'Go thrive: at some frequented corner stand;
This brush I give thee, grasp it in thy hand;
Temper the foot within this vase of oil,
And let the little tripod aid thy toil;
On this methinks I see the walking crew,
At thy request, support the miry shoe;
The foot grows black that was with dirt embrown'd,
And in thy pocket glingling halfpence sound.
The goddess plunges swift beneath the flood,
And dashes all around her showers of mud:
The youth straight chose his post; the labour ply'd
Where branching streets from Charing Cross divide;
His treble voice resounds along the Mews,
And Whitehall echoes—"Clean your Honour's shoes!"'

But the shoe-blacks have revived. What was an absolute necessity in the old times is now a luxury. On a fine day

* The World, No. 57.

the traveller, who has walked through miry ways to his railroad-station, arrives in London, and sees the boots of those who are fresh from their suburban villas brighter by contrast. He no longer is propitiated by 'Clean your honour's shoes,' but he hears 'Clean your boots.' Practical benevolence has found out its ragged boys; has clothed them in a decent scarlet livery; and established them in public thoroughfares, with the foot-rest and the brush. And, indeed, the vast accumulation of public vehicles has



Cheapside.

made the shoe-black sometimes as necessary to the passenger who has hurried across the busy road, careless of mud so that he save his limbs, as the old neglect. The great thoroughfares cannot now be adequately swept; and even a sunny day has its dirt, through the indefatigable water-cart. 'The black youth' again thrives.

Hé who would see London well must be a pedestrian. Gay who has left us the most exact as well as the most lively picture of the external London of a hundred and

twenty years ago, is enthusiastic in his preference for walking:—

‘Let others in the jolting coach confide,
Or in the leaky boat the Thames divide,
Or, box’d within the chair, contemn the street,
And trust their safety to another’s feet:
Still let me walk.’

But what a walk has he described! He sets out—as what sensible man would not?—with his feet protected with ‘firm, well-hammer’d soles;’ but if the shoe be too big,

‘Each stone will wrench th’ unwary step aside.’

This, we see, is a London without *trottoirs*. The middle of a paved street was generally occupied with the channel; and the sides of the carriage-way were full of absolute holes, where the rickety coach was often stuck as in a quagmire. Some of the leading streets, even to the time of George II., were almost as impassable as the avenues of a new American town. The only road to the Houses of Parliament before 1750 was through King Street and Union Street, ‘which were in so miserable a state, that fagots were thrown into the ruts on the days on which the King went to Parliament, to render the passage of the state-coach more easy.’* The present Saint Margaret’s Street was formed out of a thoroughfare known as Saint Margaret’s Lane, which was so narrow that ‘pales were obliged to be placed, four feet high, between the foot-path and the coach-road, to preserve the passengers from injury, and from being covered with the mud which was splashed on all sides in abundance.’† The pales here preserved the passengers more effectually than the posts of other thoroughfares. These posts, in the principal avenues, constituted the only distinction between the foot-way and carriage-way; for the space within the posts was as uneven as the space without. This inner space was sometimes so narrow, that only one person could pass at a time; and hence those contests for the wall that filled the streets with the vocife-

* Smith’s Westminster, p. 261.

† Id. p. 262.

rations of anger, and the din of assaulting sticks, and sometimes the clash of naked steel. Dr. Johnson describes how those quarrels were common when he first came to London; and how at length things were better ordered. But the change must in great part be imputed to the gradual improvement of the streets. In Gay's time there was no safety but within the posts.

'Though expedition bids, yet never stray
Where no ranged posts defend the rugged way :
Here laden carts with thundering waggons meet,
Wheels clash with wheels, and bar the narrow street.'

In wet and gusty weather the unhappy walker heard the crazy signs swinging over his head, as Gulliver describes the Red Lion of Brentford. The spouts of every house were streaming at his feet, or drenching his laced hat and his powdered wig with un pitying torrents. At every step some bulk or shop-projection narrowed the narrow road, and drove him against the coach-wheels. The chairmen, if there was room to pass, occupied all the space between the wall and the posts. The 'hooded maid' came sometimes gingerly along, with pattens and umbrella (then exclusively used by women), and of courtesy he must *yield* the wall. The small-coal man, and the sweep, and the barber, *took* the wall, in assertion of their clothes-soiling prerogative; and the bully thrust him, or was himself thrust, 'to the muddy kennel's side.' The great rule for the pedestrian was,—

'Ever be watchful to maintain the wall.'

The dignity of the wall, and its inconveniences, were as old as the time of James and Charles. Donne, in his first satire, describes the difficulties of one who took the wall:—

'Now we are in the street; he first of all,
Improvidently proud, creeps to the wall,
And so, imprisoned and hemmed in by me,
Sells for a little state his liberty.'

The streets, in the good old times, often presented obstructions to the pedestrian which appear to us like the

wonders of some unknown region. In the more recent unhappy days of public executions the wayfarer passed up Ludgate Hill with an eye averted from the Old Bailey; for there, as Monday morning came, duly hung some three, and it may be six, unhappy victims of a merciless code, judicially murdered according to our better notions. Then was the rush to see the horrid sight, and the dense crowd pouring away from it; and the pickpocket active under the gallows; and the business of life interrupted for a quarter of an hour, with little emotion even amongst the steady walkers who heeded not the spectacle: it was a thing of course. And so was the pillory in earlier times. Gay says nothing of the feelings of the passer-on; he had only to take care of his clothes:—

‘Where, elevated o’er the gaping crowd,
Clasp’d in the board the perjur’d head is bow’d,
Betimes retreat; here, thick as hailstones pour,
Turnips and half-hatch’d eggs, a mingled shower,
Among the rabble rain: some random throw
May with the trickling yolk thy cheek o’erflow.’

People used to talk of these things as coolly as Garrard wrote to Lord Strafford of them: ‘No mercy showed to Prynne; he stood in the pillory, and lost his first ear in a pillory in the palace at Westminster in full term; his other in Cheapside, where, while he stood, his volumes were burnt under his nose, which had almost suffocated him.’* The cruelty is not mitigated by the subsequent account of Garrard, that Mr. Prynne ‘hath got his ears sewed on that they grow again, as before, to his head.’† If the mob round the pillory was safely passed, there was another mob often to be encountered. Rushing along Cheapside or Covent Garden, or by the Maypole in the Strand, came the foot-ball players. It is scarcely conceivable, when London had settled into civilization, little more than a century ago—when we had our famed Augustan age of Addisons and Popes,—when laced coats, and flowing wigs, and

* Strafford’s Letters, vol. i. p. 261.

† Id. p. 266.

silver buckles, ventured into the streets, and the beau prided himself on

‘The nice conduct of a clouded cane,—’

that the great thoroughfares through which men now move, ‘intent on high designs,’ should be a field for foot-ball :—

‘The prentice quits his shop to join the crew ;
Increasing crowds the flying game pursue.’*

This is no poetical fiction. It was the same immediately after the Restoration. D’Avenant’s Frenchman thus complains of the streets of London :—

‘I would now make a safe retreat, but that methinks I am stopped by one of your heroic games, called foot-ball; which I conceive (under your favour) not very conveniently civil in the streets; especially in such irregular and narrow roads as Crooked-lane. Yet it argues your courage, much like your military pastime of throwing at cocks. But your mettle would be more magnified (since you have long allowed those two valiant exercises in the streets) to draw your archers from Finsbury, and, during high market, let them shoot at butts in Cheapside.’†

It was the same in the days of Elizabeth. To this game went the sturdy apprentices, with all the train of idlers in a motley population; and when their blood was up, as it generally was in this exercise, which Stubbes calls ‘a bloody and murthering practice, rather than a fellowly sport or pastime,’ they had little heed to the passengers in the streets, whether there was passing by

‘a velvet justice with a long
Great train of blue-coats, twelve or fourteen strong;’‡

or a gentle lady on her palfrey, wearing her ‘visor made of velvet.’§ The courtier, described in Hall, had an awful chance to save his ‘periwinke’ in such an encounter;

* Trivia. † Entertainment at Rutland House. ‡ Donne. § Stubbes.

when, with his 'bonnet vail'd,' according to the 'courtesies' of his time,

'Travelling along in London way,'

he has to recover his 'auburn locks' from the 'ditch' that crosses the thoroughfare.

The days we are noticing were not those of pedestrians. The 'red-heel'd shoes' of the time of Anne were as little suited for walking as the 'pantofles' of Elizabeth, 'whereof some be of white leather, some of black, and some of red; some of black velvet, some of white, some of red, some of green, rayed, carved, cut, and stitched all over with silk, and laid on with gold, silver, and such like.' So Stubbes describes the 'corked shoes' of his day; and he adds, what seems very apparent, 'to go abroad in them as they are now used altogether, is rather a let or hindrance to a man than otherwise.*' These fine shoes belonged to the transition state between the horse and the coach; when men were becoming 'effeminate' in the use of the new vehicles, which we have seen the Water-Poet denounced; and the highways of London were not quite suited to the walker. Shoes such as those are ridiculed by Stubbes as 'uneasy to go in;' and he adds, 'they exaggerate a mountain of mire, and gather a heap of clay and baggage together.'

When the coach and the chair were fairly launched into the streets of London, they held joint possession for more than a century and a half. We have no doubt that the chair was a most flourishing invention. The state of the pavement till the middle of the last century must have rendered carriage conveyance anything rather than safe and pleasant. Dulaure tells us that before the time of Louis XIV. the streets of Paris were so narrow, particularly in the heart of the town, that carriages could not penetrate into them.† D'Avenant's picture of London, before the fire, is not much more satisfactory: 'Sure your ancestors contrived your narrow streets in the days of

* Anatomy of Abuses. † Histoire de Paris, tome ix., p. 482.

wheelbarrows, before those greater engines, carts, were invented. Is your climate so hot that as you walk you need umbrellas of tiles to intercept the sun; or are your shambles so empty that you are afraid to take in fresh air, lest it should sharpen your stomachs? Oh, the goodly landskip of Old Fish Street! which, had it not had the ill luck to be crooked, was narrow enough to have been your founder's perspective: and where the garrets (perhaps not for want of architecture, but through abundance of amity), are so made, that opposite neighbours may shake hands without stirring from home.'

The chair had a better chance than the coach in such a state of affairs. In the pictures of coaches of the time of Elizabeth, the driver sits on a bar, or narrow chair, very low behind the horses. In those of Charles I. he



Hackney Coachman, 1650.

sometimes drives in this way, and sometimes rides as a postilion. But the hackney-coachman after the Restoration is a personage with a short whip and spurs; he has been compelled to mount one of his horses, that he may more effectually manage his progress through the narrow streets. His coach, too, is a small affair. D'Avenant describes the coaches as 'uneasily hung, and so narrow, that I took them for sedans on wheels.' As the streets were widened, after the fire, the coachman was restored to the dignity of a seat on the carriage; for, in the times of

William III. and Anne, we invariably find him sitting on a box. This was a thing for use and not for finery. Here, or in a leather pouch appended to it, the careful man carried a hammer, pincers, nails, ropes, and other appliances in case of need; and the *hammer-cloth* was devised to

conceal these necessary but unsightly remedies for broken wheels and shivered panels. The skill of this worthy artist in the way of reparation would not rust for want of use. Gay has left us two vivid pictures of the common accidents of the days of Anne. The carman was the terror of coaches from the first hour of their use; and whether he was the regular city carman, or bore the honour of the dustman, brewer's man, or coal-heaver, he was ever the same vociferous and reckless enemy of the more aristocratic coachman.

'I've seen a beau, in some ill-fated hour,
When o'er the stones chok'd kennels swell the shower,
In gilded chariot loll; he with disdain
Views spatter'd passengers all drench'd in rain.
With mud filled high, the rumbling cart draws near;—
Now rule thy prancing steeds, lac'd charioteer:
The dustman lashes on with spiteful rage,
His ponderous spokes thy painted wheel engage;
Crush'd is thy pride, down falls the shrieking beau,
The slabby pavement crystal fragments strew;
Black floods of mire th' embroider'd coat disgrace,
And mud enwraps the honours of his face.'

The dangers of opened vaults, and of mighty holes in the paving, fenced round with no protecting rail, and illuminated only by a glimmering rushlight in a dark street, seem to belong altogether to some barbaric region which never could have been London:—

'Where a dim gleam the paly lantern throws
O'er the mid pavement, heapy rubbish grows,
Or arched vaults their gaping jaws extend,
Or the dark caves to common-shores descend;
Oft by the winds extinct the signal lies,
Or smother'd in the glimmering socket dies
Ere Night has half roll'd round her ebon throne;
In the wide gulf the shatter'd coach o'erthrown
Sinks with the snorting steeds; the reins are broke,
And from the crackling axle flies the spoke.'

But long after Gay's time the carmen and the pavement made havoc with coaches. If we open Hogarth, the great painter of manners shows us the vehicular dangers of

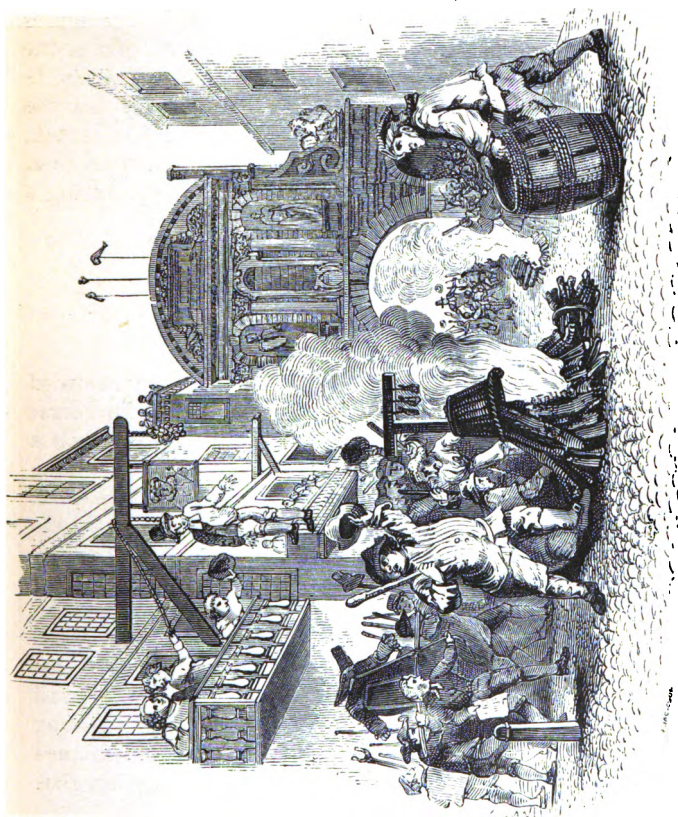
his age. Bonfires in the streets on rejoicing nights, with the 'Flying coach,' that went five miles an hour, overturned in the flames;* the four lawyers getting out of a hackney-coach that has come in collision with a carman, while the brewer's man rides upon his shaft in somniferous majesty;† the dustman's bell, the little boy's drum, the knife-grinder's wheel, all in the middle of the street, to the terror of horses;‡ these representations exhibit the perils that assailed the man who ventured into a coach. The chair was no doubt safer, but it had its inconveniences. Swift describes the unhappy condition of a fop during a 'City Shower':—

'Box'd in a chair the beau impatient sits,
While spouts run clattering o'er the roof by fits;
And ever and anon with frightful din
The leather sounds;—he trembles from within !'

The chairmen were very absolute fellows. They crowded round the tavern-doors, waiting for shilling customers: but they did not hesitate to set down their box when a convenient occasion offered for the recreation of a foaming mug.§ They were for the most part sturdy Milesians, revelling, if they belonged to the aristocracy, in all the finery of embroidered coats and epaulettes, and cocked hats and feathers. If they were hackney-chairmen they asserted their power of the strong arm, and were often daring enough as a body to influence the fate of Westminster and Middlesex elections, in the terror which they produced with fist and bludgeon. They, and the whole race of bullying and fighting ministers of transit, belonged to what Fielding termed 'The Fourth Estate.' That dignity is now assigned to the Press. Civilization has been too strong for Barbarism.

An ingenious Frenchman thus describes the populace of England:—'The people of the inferior classes are distinguished by a brutishness of which one can scarcely form an

* Night. † Second Stage of Cruelty. ‡ Enraged Musician.
§ Hogarth's Beer Street.



Temple Bar.—Hogarth.—P. 308.

idea. Abandoned from their infancy to all the excesses of drunkenness, they display in their whole conduct a spirit of rudeness, of bluntness, and of quarrelsomeness, which engenders those pugilistic encounters of which we have heard so much. Almost all have acquired a deadly aptness



The Palace Gate, St. James's.

in this bloody exercise: rarely does a holiday pass away without a fatal encounter. Noblemen themselves (for England, in its respect for the Golden Calf, has preserved its great barons, the source of all its riches), and even Peers of Parliament, take part sometimes in these street-fights and these porters' quarrels.'

There is an English writer who is equally severe upon

the 'brutishness' of the 'fourth estate.' He is speaking most seriously when he complains that 'the mob' attack well-dressed river passengers 'with all kinds of scurrilous, abusive, and indecent terms;'—that they insult foot passengers by day, and knock them down by night;—that no coach can pass along the streets without the utmost difficulty and danger, because the carmen draw their waggons across the road, while they laugh at the sufferers from the alehouse window;—and finally, that they insult ladies of fashion, and drive them from the Park of a Sunday evening.

But these two descriptions of great masses of the people are not contemporaneous. The Frenchman writes in a work still in course of publication—'Encyclopédie Catholique; Répertoire Universel'—which in 1848 had reached eighteen quarto volumes. The Englishman is Henry Fielding, who, if we may judge from concurrent testimony, takes no exaggerated view of the lower London Life of the year 1752.* We trust the Frenchman is a little behind the present time.

Let us turn again to Hogarth's print of 'Night'—the scene, Charing Cross. It is a bonfire night. The fagot blazes in the centre of the narrow street; the dozen farthing candles illuminate the barber's window; the light gleams from the watchman's lanthorn, as he leads home the drunken freemason: but there is not a lamp to make 'darkness visible' when the rioting is over. London was then utterly without a Police. The scene in the night-cellar of 'Industry and Idleness,' where a murdered man is cast into a vault without any attempt at secrecy, was the representation of a common occurrence in 1746; for in 'The Blood Bowl House,' near Water Lane, Fleet Street, of which this is a representation, 'there seldom passed a month without the commission of a murder.†' Fielding tells us that in 1753, in the month of August, he 'was almost fatigued to death with several long examinations, relating to five different murders, all committed within the space of a week, by different gangs of street-robbers.'

* Covent Garden Journal, No. 49. † Biographical Anecdotes of Hogarth.

The establishment of the watch in cities by Henry III. was the first step towards a preventive police. But it is not easy to comprehend how, nearly five hundred years afterwards (in 1744), London should have been in such a state that the Lord Mayor and Aldermen went up with an address to the King, representing 'that divers confederacies of great numbers of evil-disposed persons, armed with blud-



London Street-lights, 1760.

geons, pistols, cutlasses, and other dangerous weapons, infest not only the private lanes and passages, but likewise the public streets and places of usual concourse, and commit most daring outrages upon the persons of your Majesty's good subjects, whose affairs oblige them to pass through the streets, by terrifying, robbing, and wounding them; and these facts are frequently perpetrated at such times as were

heretofore deemed hours of security.' If in the 'hours of security' armed gangs thus destroyed the safety of ordinary life, what must they have been in the hours of darkness, when a feeble light was hung out here and there from six to eleven o'clock, and after that the city was surrendered to gloom and rapine? In the first fifty years of the eighteenth century we should assuredly have thought that society had settled into order and security. These atrocities could not have existed without a most lamentable weakness in the government. Everything was left to the narrow-minded local authorities. There was no central power. The government (what a misnomer!) had nothing to do but to make war, and to hang. The Lord Mayor and Aldermen cried, 'Hang, hang!' 'Permit us, sir, to express our hopes that a speedy, rigorous, and exemplary execution of the laws upon the persons of offenders, as they shall fall into the hands of justice, may, under your Majesty's princely wisdom, conduce greatly to the suppressing these enormities, by striking terror into the wicked, and preventing others from entering into such evil courses.' And the King promised he would hang: 'Nothing shall be wanting on my part to put the laws in execution, to support the magistrates rigorously to punish such heinous offenders.' Some persons, whose good deeds, like those of many others, have fallen into oblivion, suggested a wiser course; and Maitland, the historian of the city, from whose works we collect these remarkable facts, tells us, '*this year* was enacted another Act of Parliament for making more effectual provision for *enlightening* the streets of this city.' A mental illumination had been required before this desirable event.

Dr. Johnson has given us a picture of the dangers of Night in London, about this period of partial illumination:

'Prepare for death if here at night you roam,
And sign your will before you sup from home.
Some fiery fop, with new commission vain,
Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man,—
Some frolic drunkard, reeling from a feast,
Provokes a broil, and stabs you for a jest.

Yet even these heroes, mischievously gay,
Lords of the street and terrors of the way,
Flush'd as they are with folly, youth, and wine,
Their prudent insults to the poor confine:
Afar they mark the flambeau's bright approach,
And shun the shining train and golden coach.'

This, then, was the age of flambeaux and link-boys. London had only still its lanthorns here and there, and its few glass lamps. Westminster was perhaps worse provided. But the coach rolled from the theatre and the ball with its



liveried torch-bearers; and even the present century has seen flambeaux in London. The intelligent antiquary—not he who discovers nothing of antiquity but what is buried in the earth or described in the classics—may behold a relic

of the manners of a hundred years ago in some of our existing squares and streets, that have stood up against the caprices of fashion. On each side the door-way, and generally attached to the posts that carry an arching lamp-rail, are two instruments that look like the old tin horn of the crier of 'great news.' They are the flambeaux extinguishers: and when the gilded coach was dragged heavily along at midnight to the mansion (people of fashion once went to bed at midnight), and the principal door was closed upon the lords and ladies of the great house, the footmen thrust their torches into these horn-like cavities, and, as the horses moved off by instinct to their stables, the same footmen crept down the area in utter darkness. There was perhaps a solitary link-boy at the corner of the square, especially if an open cesspool, or a little lake of mud, promised a locality where gentlemen without his aid might break their necks or soil their stockings. But he generally hovered about the theatres and taverns. Gay describes 'the officious link-boy's smoky light;' but he has also given the fraternity a bad character:—

'Though thou art tempted by the link-man's call,
Yet trust him not along the lonely wall;
In the mid-way he'll quench the flaming brand,
And share the booty with the pilfering band.
Still keep the public streets, where oily rays,
Shot from the crystal lamp, o'erspread thy ways.'

Oily rays, and crystal lamps! The very existence of the 'link-men,' and 'the pilfering band' tells us to what extent the illumination reached, and what were dignified by the name of 'public streets.'

But the age of lamps was really approaching. The city became vigorous in lighting, when it was found that severity did little against the thieves; and the Westminster Paving and Lighting Act was passed in 1762. Then came the glories of the old lamp-lighters;—the progress through each district to trim the wicks in a morning—and the terrible skurry, with ladders driven against your breast, and oil showered upon your head, as twilight approached.

What a twinkling then was there through all the streets! But we were proud of our lamps; and Beckmann, in his 'History of Inventions,' has described them as something like a wonder of the world. Beneath the faint lamp slept the watchman; or, if he walked, he still walked with his lanthorn; and the link-boy, yet a needful auxiliary to the lamp and the lanthorn, guided the reeling gentleman from his tavern to his lodging.

'The Silent Woman,' one of the most popular of Ben Jonson's comedies, presents to us a more vivid picture than can elsewhere be found of the characteristic noises of the streets of London more than two centuries ago. It



Link-boy.

is easy to form to ourselves a general idea of the hum and buzz of the bees and drones of this mighty hive, under a state of manners essentially different from our own; but it is not so easy to attain a lively conception of the particular sounds that once went to make up this great discord, and so to compare them in their resemblances and their differences with the roar which the great Babel *now* 'sends through all her gates.'

The principal character of Jonson's 'Silent Woman' is founded upon a sketch by a Greek writer of the fourth century, Libanius. Jonson designates this character by the name of 'Morose;' and his peculiarity is that he can bear no kind of noise, even that of ordinary talk. The plot turns upon this affectation; for, having been entrapped into a marriage with the Silent Woman, she and her friends assail him with tongues the most obstreperous, and clamours the

most uproarious, until, to be relieved of this nuisance, he comes to terms with his nephew for a portion of his fortune, and is relieved of the silent woman, who is in reality a boy in disguise. We extract the dialogue which will form a text to our paper ; the speakers being Truewit, Clerimont, and a Page :—

‘ *True.* I met that stiff piece of formality, his uncle, yesterday, with a huge turban of night-caps on his head, buckled over his ears.

‘ *Cler.* O ! that’s his custom when he walks abroad. He can endure no noise, man.

‘ *True.* So I have heard. But is the disease so ridiculous in him as it is made ? They say he has been upon divers treaties with the fish-wives and orange-women ; and articles propounded between them : marry, the chimney-sweepers will not be drawn in.

‘ *Cler.* No, nor the broom-men ; they stand out stiffly. He cannot endure a costard-monger ; he swoons if he hears one.

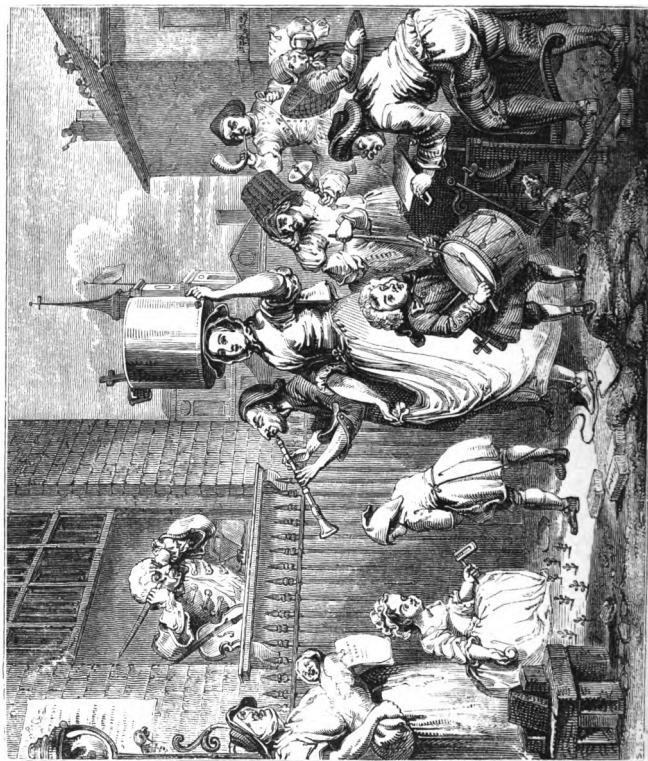
‘ *True.* Methinks a smith should be ominous.

‘ *Cler.* Or any hammer-man. A brasier is not suffered to dwell in the parish, nor an armourer. He would have hang’d a pewterer’s ’prentice once upon a Shrove-Tuesday’s riot, for being of that trade, when the rest were quit.

‘ *True.* A trumpet should fright him terribly, or the hautboys.

‘ *Cler.* Out of his senses. The waits of the city have a pension of him not to come near that ward. This youth practised on him one night like the bellman, and never left till he had brought him down to the door with a long sword ; and there left him flourishing with the air.

‘ *Page.* Why, sir, he hath chosen a street to lie in, so narrow at both ends that it will receive no coaches, nor carts, nor any of these common noises : and therefore we that love him devise to bring him in such as we may, now and then, for his exercise, to breathe him. He would grow resty else in his cage ; his virtue would rust without action.



The Enraged Musician.—Hogarth.—P. 317.

I entreated a bearward, one day, to come down with the dogs of some four parishes that way, and I thank him he did ; and cried his games under Master Morose's window ; till he was sent crying away, with his head made a most bleeding spectacle to the multitude. And, another time, a fencer marching to his prize had his drum most tragically run through, for taking that street in his way at my request.

True. A good wag ! How does he for the bells ?

Cler. O ! in the queen's time he was wont to go out of town every Saturday at ten o'clock, or on holyday eves. But now, by reason of the sickness, the perpetuity of ringing has made him devise a room with double walls and treble ceilings ; the windows close shut and caulk'd ; and there he lives by candlelight.'

Was Hogarth familiar with the old noise-hater when he conceived his own 'Enraged Musician ?' In this extraordinary gathering together of the producers of the most discordant sounds we have a representation which may fairly match the dramatist's description of street noises. Here we have the milkmaid's scream, the mackerel-seller's shout, the sweep upon the house-top,—to match the fishwives and orange-women, the broom-men and costard-mongers. The smith, who was 'ominous,' had no longer his forge in the busy streets of Hogarth's time ; the armourer was obsolete : but Hogarth can rival their noises with the paviour's hammer, the sow-gelder's horn, and the knife-grinder's wheel. The waits of the city had a pension not to come near Morose's ward ; but it was out of the power of the 'Enraged Musician' to avert the terrible discord of the blind hautboy-player. The bellman, who frightened the sleepers at midnight, was extinct ; but modern London had acquired the dustman's bell. The bear-ward no longer came down the street with the dogs of four parishes, nor did the fencer march with a drum to his prize ; but there was the ballad-singer, with her squalling child, roaring worse than bear or dog ; and the drum of the little boy playing at soldiers was a more abiding nuisance than the

fencer. Morose and the 'Enraged Musician' had each the church-bells to fill up the measure of discord.

But London has lost most of its individual noises. In our own days there has been legislation for the benefit of tender ears; and there are now penalties, with police constables to enforce them, against all persons blowing any horn or using any other noisy instrument, for the purpose of call-



Horn-men.—'Great News!'

ing persons together, or of announcing any show or entertainment, or for the purpose of hawking, selling, distributing, or collecting any article, or of obtaining money or alms. These enactments are stringent enough to have banished from our streets all those uncommon noises which did something to relieve the monotony of the one endless roar of the tread of feet and the rush of wheels. The street noise now is deafening when we are in the midst of it; but in some secluded place, such as Lincoln's Inn Gardens, it is the ever-present sullen sound of angry waves dashing upon the shingles. The horn that proclaimed extraordinary

news, running to and fro among peaceful squares and secluded courts, was sometimes a relief. The bell of the dustman was not altogether unpleasant. In the twilight hour, when the shutters were not yet closed, and the candles were not yet burning, the tinkle of the muffin-man had something in it very soothing. It is gone. But the legislators have still left us our street-music. There was talk of its abolition; but they have satisfied themselves with enacting that musicians, on being warned to depart from the neighbourhood of the house of any householder by the occupier or his servant, or by a police-constable, incur a penalty of forty shillings by refusal. De la Serre, who came to England with Mary de Medici, when she visited the Queen of Charles I., is



Muffin-man, 1841.

enthusiastic in his praises of the street-music of London: —‘In all public places, violins, hautboys, and other kinds of instruments are so common, for the gratification of individuals, that in every hour of the day our ears may be charmed with their sweet melody.’ England was then a musical nation; but from that time nearly to our own her street-music became a thing to be legislated against.

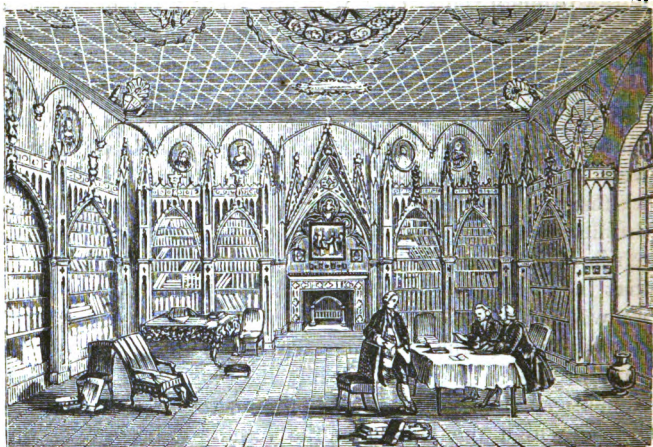
In the days of Elizabeth, and of James and Charles, the people were surrounded with music, and imbued with musical associations. The cittern was heard in every barber’s shop; and even up to the publication of the ‘Tatler’ it was the same: ‘Go into a barber’s anywhere, no matter in what district, and it is ten to one you will hear the sounds either of a fiddle or guitar, or see the instruments hanging up somewhere.’ The barbers or their apprentices were the performers: ‘If idle, they pass their time in life-

delighting music.' Thus writes a pamphleteer of 1597. Doctor King, about the beginning of the last century, found the barbers degenerating in their accomplishments, and he assigns the cause: 'Turning themselves to periwig-making, they have forgot their cittern and their music.' The cittern twanged then in the barbers' shops in the fresh mornings especially; and then came forth the carman to bear his loads through the narrow thoroughfares. He also was musical. We all know how Falstaff describes Justice Shallow: 'He came ever in the rear-ward of the fashion, and sung those tunes to the over-scutched housewives that he heard the carmen whistle.' He had a large stock of tunes. In Ben Jonson's 'Bartholomew Fair,' one of the characters exclaims, 'If he meet but a carman in the street, and I find him not loth to keep him off of him, he will whistle him and all his tunes over at night in his sleep.' Half a century later even, 'barbers, cobblers, and plowmen,' were enumerated as 'the heirs of music.' Who does not perceive that when Isaac Walton's milkmaid sings,—

'Come live with me and be my love,'

she is doing nothing remarkable? These charming words were the common possession of all. The people were the heirs of poetry as well as of music. They had their own delicious madrigals to sing, in which music was 'married to immortal verse,'—and they could sing them. Morley, writing in 1597, says, 'Supper being ended, and music-books, according to custom, being brought to the table, the mistress of the house presented me with a *part*, earnestly requesting me to sing; but when, after many excuses, I protested unfeignedly that I could not, every one began to wonder—yea, some whispered to others, demanding how I was brought up.' In a condition of society like this, the street-music must have been worth listening to. 'A noise of musicians,' as a little band was called, was to be found everywhere; and they attended upon the guests in taverns and ordinaries, and at 'good men's feasts' in private houses. In 'The Silent Woman,' it is said, 'The smell of the venison,

going through the streets, will invite one noise of fiddlers or other ;' and again, ' They have intelligence of all feasts ; there's good correspondence betwixt them and the London cooks.' Feasts were then not mere occasions for gluttony and drunkenness, as they became in the next generation. As the drunkenness went on increasing, the taste for music went on diminishing. In the next century, the ' Tatler ' writes, ' In Italy nothing is more frequent than to hear a cobbler working to an opera tune ; but, on the contrary, our honest countrymen have so little an inclination to music, that they seldom begin to sing till they are drunk.' Thus we went on till the beginning of the present century, and indeed later. The street-music was an indication of the popular taste. Hogarth's blind hautboy-player, and his shrieking ballad-singer, are no caricatures. The execrable sounds which the lame and the blind produced were the mere arts of mendicancy. The principle of extorting money by hideous sounds was carried as far as it could go by a fellow of the name of Keeling, called Blind Jack, who performed on the flageolet with his nose. Every description of street exhibition was accompanied with these terrible noises. The vaulter, and the dancing lass, and the tumbler creeping through a hoop, and the puppet-showman, and the dancing dogs, and the bear and monkey, had each their own peculiar din, whether of drum, fiddle, horn, or bag-pipes, compared with which the music of Morose's bear-ward and fencer would have been as the harmony of the spheres.



The Library, Strawberry Hill.

WALPOLE'S WORLD OF FASHION.

'WHEN I was very young, and in the height of the opposition to my father, my mother wanted a large parcel of bugles; for what use I forget. As they were then out of fashion, she could get none. At last she was told of a quantity in a little shop in an obscure alley in the City. We drove thither; found a great stock; she bought it, and bade the proprietor send it home. He said, "Whither?" "To Sir Robert Walpole's." He asked, coolly, "*Who is Sir Robert Walpole?*"' *

'*What was Strawberry Hill?*' might be a similar question with many persons, were we not living in a somewhat different age from that of Sir Robert Walpole. Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill is gone. Its place is being occupied with trim villas, inhabited by a class of whose existence Walpole would have been as ignorant as the City

* Horace Walpole to the Miss Berrys, March 5, 1791.

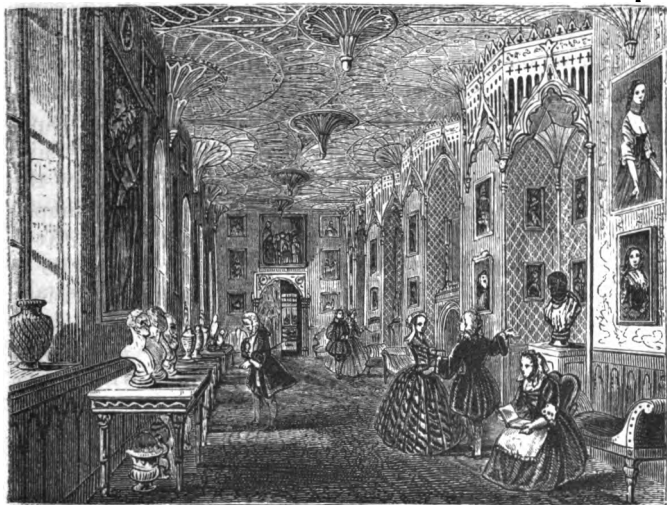
shopkeeper was of the great Sir Robert. The maker of Strawberry Hill—the builder-up of its galleries, and tribunes, and Holbein-chambers—the arranger of its ‘painted glass and gloom’—the collector of its pictures, and books, and bijouterie, says of himself, ‘I am writing, I am building—both works that will outlast the memory of battles and heroes! Truly, I believe, the one will as much as t’other. My buildings are paper, like my writings, and both will be blown away in ten years after I am dead: if they had not the substantial use of amusing me while I live, they would be worth little indeed.’* Horace Walpole himself prevented the realisation of his own prophecy. It was said of him, even during his lifetime, ‘that he had outlived three sets of his own battlements;’ but he nevertheless contrived, by tying up his toy-warehouse and its moveables with entails and jointures through several generations, to keep the thing tolerably entire for nearly half a century after he had left that state of being where ‘moth and dust do corrupt.’ And though the paper portion of his ‘works’—his ‘Royal and Noble Authors,’ his ‘Anecdotes of Painting,’ his ‘Historic Doubts,’ &c.—are formed of materials not much more durable than his battlements, he was during a long life scattering about the world an abundance of other paper fragments, that have not only lasted ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years after he was dead, but which aftertimes will not willingly let die. It was in Strawberry Hill that the every-day thoughts and experiences for the most part centred that have made the letters of Horace Walpole the best record of the manners of the upper ranks during half a century, when very great social changes were working all around. Strawberry Hill and Horace Walpole are inseparably associated in our minds. The house in Arlington Street, from which he sometimes dates, is like most other West-end houses, a thing distinguished only by its number; and which has no more abiding associations than the

* Horace Walpole to Conway, August 5, 1761.

chariot which rolled on from its first drawing-room through the necessary decay of cracked varnish and split panels, until its steps displayed the nakedness of their original iron, and the dirty rag that was once a carpet was finally succeeded by the luxury of clean straw once a week. We cannot conceive Horace Walpole in a house with three windows upon a floor, in a formal row of ugly brick brethren. It is in Strawberry Hill, in the 'little parlour hung with a stone-colour Gothic paper, and Jackson's Venetian prints'—or in the 'charming closet hung with green paper, and water-colour pictures'—or in 'the room where we always live, hung with a blue and white paper in stripes, adorned with festoons'—that we fancy him writing to Montagu, Mann, Chute, and Conway, in the days when 'we pique ourselves upon nothing but simplicity,' and Lady Townshend exclaimed of the house, 'It is just such a house as a parson's, where the children lie at the foot of the bed.' In a few years the owner had visions of galleries, and round towers, and cloisters, and chapels: and then the house became filled with kingly armour, and rare pictures, and cabinets of miniatures by Oliver and Petitot, and Raffaele china. Then, when Strawberry Hill came to the height of its glory, the owner kept 'an inn, the sign the Gothic Castle,' and his whole time was passed in giving tickets for seeing it, and hiding himself while it was seen.* Lastly came the time when the *old* man was laid up for weeks with the gout, and the building and curiosity-buying was at an end; and after the Duchess of York had come to see his house in 1793, when he put a carpet on the step of his gate, and matted his court, and presented chocolate upon a salver, he says, here 'will end my connexions with courts, beginning with George the First, great-great-great-grandfather to the Duchess of York! It sounds as if there could not have been above three generations more before Adam.' There never was a place so associated with the memory of one man as Strawberry Hill is with Horace Walpole.

* Horace Walpole to Montagu, Sept. 3, 1763.

The letters of Horace Walpole cannot at all be regarded as a picture of society in general. He has no distinct notion whatever of the habits of the middle classes. Society with him is divided into two great sections—the aristocracy and the mob. He was made by his times; and this is one of the remarkable features of his times.



The Gallery, Strawberry Hill.

With all his sympathy for literature, he has a decided hatred for authors that are out of the pale of fashion. Fielding, Johnson, Sterne, Goldsmith, the greatest names of his day, are with him ridiculous and contemptible. He cannot be regarded, therefore, as a representative of the literary classes of his times. As the son of a great minister he was petted and flattered till his father fell from his power; he says himself he had then enough of flattery. When he mixed among his equals in the political intrigues of the time, he displayed no talent for business or oratory. His feeble constitution compelled him to seek amusement

instead of dissipation; and his great amusement was to look upon the follies of his associates and to laugh at them. He was not at bottom an ill-natured man, or one without feeling. He affected that insensibility which is the exclusive privilege of high life—and long may it continue so. When Lord Mountford shot himself, and another Lord rejoiced that his friend's death would allow him to hire the best cook in England, the selfish indifference was probably more affected than real. Walpole himself takes off his own mask on one occasion. When he heard of Gray's death, in writing to Chute he apologises for the concern he feels, and adds, 'I thought that what I had seen of the world had hardened my heart; but I find that it had *formed my language*, not extinguished my tenderness.' When he speaks of individuals we may occasionally think that the world had formed his language; he is too often spiteful and malicious: but when he describes a class he is not likely much to exaggerate. The *esprit de corps* would render him somewhat charitable: if he did not 'extenuate' he would not set down 'in malice,' when he was holding up a mirror of himself and of the very people with whom he was corresponding.

In the early part of the last century London saw less of the wealth and splendour of the aristocracy than previous to the Revolution. The great political divisions of the kingdom kept many families away from the Court; and the habits of the first Elector of Hanover who walked into the ownership of St. James's, and of his son and successor, were not very likely to attract the proud and the discontented from the scenes of their own proper greatness. Walpole, writing from Newmarket in 1743, says, 'How dismal, how solitary, how scrub does this town look; and yet it has actually a street of houses better than Parma or Modena! Nay, the houses of the people of fashion, who come hither for the races, are palaces to what houses in London itself were fifteen years ago. People do begin to live again now; and I suppose in a term we shall revert to York Houses, Clarendon Houses, &c. But from that

grandeur all the nobility had contracted themselves to live in coops of a dining-room, a dark back room, with one eye in a corner, and a closet. Think what London would be if the chief houses were in it, as in the cities in other countries, and not dispersed like great rarity-plums in a vast pudding of country.' It was some time before the large houses of the nobility once more made London the magnificent capital which it subsequently became. In the meantime the lordly tenants of the 'coops' above described spent a vast deal of their time in places of *public* resort. Let us cast a rapid glance at the fashionable amusements of the second half of the last century.

The year 1741 presents to us a curious spectacle of the aristocracy and the people at issue, and almost in mortal conflict, not upon a question of corn or taxes, but whether the Italian school of music should prevail, or the Anglo-German. 'The opera is to be on the French system of dancers, scenes, and dresses. The directors have already laid out great sums. They talk of a mob to silence the operas, as they did the French players; but it will be more difficult, for here half the young noblemen in town are engaged, and they will not be so easily persuaded to humour the taste of the mobility: in short, they have already retained several eminent lawyers from the Bear Garden to plead their defence.'* The fight had been going on for nearly twenty years. Everybody knows Swift's epigram,

'On the Feuds about Handel and Bononcini.'

'Strange all this difference should be
'Twixt Tweedle-Dum and Tweedle-Dee.'

Walpole naturally belonged to the party of his 'order.' Handel had produced his great work, the 'Messiah,' in 1741, at Covent Garden. Fashion was against him, though he was supported by the court, the mob, and the poet of:

* Horace Walpole to Mann, Oct. 8, 1741.

common sensè. He went to Ireland; and the triumph of the Italian faction was thus immortalised by Pope:—

‘O Cara! Cara! silence all that train:
 Joy to great Chaos! let Division reign:
 Chromatic tortures soon shall drive them hence,
 Break all their nerves, and fritter all their sense:
 One trill shall harmonise joy, grief, and rage,
 Wake the dull Church, and lull the ranting Stage:
 To the same notes thy sons shall hum, or snore,
 And all thy yawning daughters cry encore.
 Another Phœbus, thy own Phœbus reigns,
 Joys in my jigs, and dances in my chains.
 But soon, ah soon, Rebellion will commence,
 If Music meanly borrows aid from Sense:
 Strong in new arms, lo! giant Handel stands,
 Like bold Briareus, with a hundred hands;
 To stir, to rouse, to shake the soul he comes,
 And Jove’s own thunders follow Mars’s drums.
 Arrest him, empress, or you sleep no more—
 She heard, and drove him to th’ Hibernian shore.’*

Handel came back to London in 1742, and the tide then turned in his favour. Horace Walpole shows us how fashion tried to sneer him down; he is himself the oracle of the divinity. ‘Handel has set up an oratorio against the operas, and succeeds. He has hired all the goddesses from farces, and the singers of Roast Beef from between the acts at both theatres, with a man with one note in his voice, and a girl without ever a one; and so they sing, and make brave hallelujahs; and the good company encore the recitative, if it happens to have any cadence like what they call a tune.’† The Italian Opera House in the Haymarket itself went out of fashion in a few years, and the nobility had their favourite house in Lincoln’s Inn Fields. What the Court then patronised the aristocracy rejected. ‘The late royalties went to the Haymarket, when it was the fashion to frequent the other opera in Lincoln’s Inn Fields. Lord Chesterfield one night came into the latter, and was asked if he had been at the other house? “Yes,”

* Dunciad, Book IV. † Horace Walpole to Mann, Feb. 24, 1743.



Pall Mall, about 1740. — P. 328.

said he, "but there was nobody but the king and queen; and as I thought they might be talking business, I came away." * However, amidst all these feuds the Italian Opera became firmly established in London; and through that interchange of taste which fortunately neither the prejudices of exclusiveness nor ignorance can long prevent, the people began gradually to appreciate the opera, and the nobility became enthusiastic admirers of the oratorio.

In the days of Walpole the Theatre was fashionable; and in their love of theatrical amusements the nobility did not



Garrick as Macbeth.

affect to be exclusive. In not liking Garrick when he first came out, Walpole and his friend Gray indulged probably in the fastidiousness of individual taste, instead of representing the opinions of the fashionable or literary classes. Gray writes, 'Did I tell you about Mr. Garrick, that the

* Horace Walpole to Conway, Sept. 25, 1761.

town are horn-mad after? There are a dozen dukes of a night at Goodman's Fields sometimes; and yet I am stiff in the opposition.' Walpole, in May, 1742, six months after Garrick's first appearance, says, 'All the run is now after Garrick, a wine-merchant, who is turned player, at Goodman's Fields. He plays all parts, and is a very good mimic. His acting I have seen, and may say to you, who will not tell it again here, I see nothing wonderful in it; but it is heresy to say so: the Duke of Argyle says he is superior to Betterton.* From some cause or other, Walpole hated and vilified Garrick all his life. His pride was perhaps wounded when he was compelled to jostle against the actor in the best society. In the instance of Garrick, Pope's strong sense was again opposed to Walpole's super-refinement. The great poet of manners said to Lord Orrery on witnessing Garrick's Richard III., 'That young man never had his equal as an actor, and will never have a rival.' As a manager Garrick did not scruple to resent an injustice, however offensive to the leaders of the ton. 'There has been a new comedy, called "The Foundling," far from good, but it took. Lord Hobart and some more young men made a party to damn it, merely for the love of damnation. The Templars espoused the play, and went armed with syringes charged with stinking oil and with sticking plasters; but it did not come to action. Garrick was *impertinent*, and the pretty men gave over their plot the moment they grew to be in the right.† The Templars with their syringes and stinking oil, and Lord Hobart with his ready 'damnation,' give one a notion of the mob legislation of the theatres at that period, for boxes, pit, and gallery constituted one mob. There was a calm awhile, but in 1755 Walpole writes: 'England seems returning: for those who are not in Parliament there are nightly riots at Drury Lane, where there is an Anti-Gallican party against some French dancers. The young men of quality have protected them

* Horace Walpole to Mann.

† Id., March 11, 1748.

till last night, when, being opera-night, the galleries were victorious.' Walpole tells us a most amusing story of the manner in which these things were managed in his earlier days. 'The town has been trying all this winter to beat pantomimes off the stage, very boisterously; for *it is the way here to make even an affair of taste and sense a matter of riot and arms*. Fleetwood, the master of Drury Lane, has omitted nothing to support them, as they supported his house. About ten days ago he let into the pit great numbers of Bear Garden *bruisers* (that is the term), to knock down everybody that hissed. The pit rallied their forces and drove them out. I was sitting very quietly in the side-boxes, contemplating all this. On a sudden the curtain flew up, and discovered the whole stage filled with blackguards, armed with bludgeons and clubs, to menace the audience. This raised the greatest uproar; and among the rest, who flew into a passion but your friend the philosopher! In short, one of the actors, advancing to the front of the stage to make an apology for the manager, he had scarce began to say, "Mr. Fleetwood—" when your friend, with a most audible voice and dignity of anger, called out, "He is an impudent rascal!" The whole pit huzzaed, and repeated the words. Only think of my being a popular orator! But what was still better, while my shadow of a person was dilating to the consistence of a hero, one of the chief ringleaders of the riot, coming under the box where I sat, and pulling off his hat, said, "Mr. Walpole, what would you please to have us do next?" It is impossible to describe to you the confusion into which this apostrophe threw me. I sank down into the box, and have never since ventured to set my foot into the playhouse. The next night the uproar was repeated with greater violence, and nothing was heard but voices calling out, "Where is Mr. W.? where is Mr. W.?" In short, the whole town has been entertained with my prowess, and Mr. Conway has given me the name of Wat Tyler.* The

* Horace Walpole to Mann, November 26, 1744.

participation of people of fashion in theatrical rows is a sufficient evidence of the interest which they took in the theatre. They carried the matter still farther in 1751, by hiring Drury Lane to act a play themselves. 'The rage was so great to see this performance, that *the House of Commons literally adjourned at three o'clock on purpose.*'*

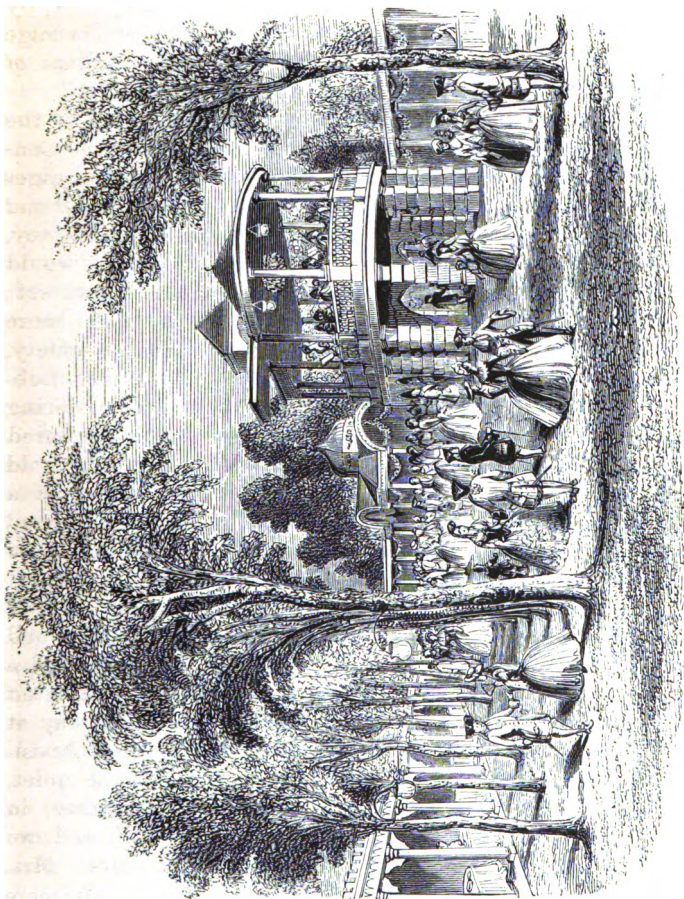
Vauxhall and Ranelagh figure in the descriptions of the 'Spectator' and the 'Citizen of the World,' in the 'Connoisseur' and in 'Evelina.'† But none of those passages give us an adequate notion of the *fashion* of Vauxhall and Ranelagh. Addison, and Goldsmith, and Miss Burney, looked upon the great crowd of all ranks as they would look upon life in general. Walpole saw only his own set; but how graphically has he described them! The mere surface of the shows, the gilding and varnish of the gaiety, fills the imagination. At Vauxhall we see Prince Lobkowitz's footmen, in very rich new liveries, bearing torches, and the prince himself in a new sky-blue watered tabby coat, with gold button-holes, and a magnificent gold waistcoat; and Madame l'Ambassadrice de Vénise in a green sack, with a straw hat; and we hear the violins and hautboys, the drums and trumpets, of the Prince of Wales's barges.‡ Imagine such a sight in our own days! And then, one-and-twenty years later in life, Walpole is again going to Vauxhall to a *ridotto al fresco*, with a tide and torrent of coaches so prodigious, that he is an hour and a half on the road before he gets half way from Arlington Street. 'There is to be a rival mob in the same way at Ranelagh to-morrow; for the greater the folly and imposition, the greater is the crowd.'§ But for a little quiet, domestic party at Vauxhall, composed of the highest in rank and fashion, Walpole is the most delightful, and, we have no doubt, the most veracious of chroniclers. Mrs. Tibbs and the pawnbroker's widow of Goldsmith are mere pretenders to coarseness by the side of Lady Caroline

* Horace Walpole to Mann.

† London, vol. i. No. 23.

‡ Horace Walpole to Conway, June 27, 1748.

§ Horace Walpole to Montagu, May 11, 1769.



Vauxhall in 1751.—P. 332.

Petersham and Miss Ashe. Walpole receives a card from Lady Caroline in 1750 to go with her to the Gardens. When he calls, the ladies 'had just finished their last layer of red, and looked as handsome as crimson could make them.' All the town had been summoned; and in the Mall they picked up dukes and damsels, and two young ladies especially, who had been 'trusted by their mothers for the first time of their lives to the matronly care of Lady Caroline.' They marched to their barge with a boat of French horns attending. Upon debarking at Vauxhall they 'picked up Lord Granby, arrived very drunk from "Jenny's Whim;" where, instead of going to old Strafford's catacombs to make honourable love, he had dined with Lady Fanny, and left her and eight other women and four other men playing at brag.' 'Jenny's Whim' was a tavern at Chelsea Bridge. The party assemble in their booth and go to supper, after a process of cookery which would rather astonish a Lady Caroline of our own day: 'We minced seven chickens into a china dish, which Lady Caroline stewed over a lamp with three pats of butter and a flagon of water, stirring, and rattling, and laughing, and we every minute expecting to have the dish fly about our ears. She had brought Betty, the fruit-girl, with hampers of strawberries and cherries from Rogers's, and made her wait upon us, and then made her sup by us at a little table. The conversation was no less lively than the whole transaction.' Lady Caroline was not singular in her tastes. Before the accession of George III. it was by no means uncommon for ladies of quality to sup at taverns, and even to *invite* the gentlemen to be of the company. Walpole says that in 1755 a Frenchman, who was ignorant of the custom, took some liberties with Lady Harrington, through which mistake her house was afterwards closed against him. This practice, which to us seems so startling, was a relic of the manners of a century earlier. The decorum of the court of George III. banished the custom from the upper ranks; but it lingered amongst the middle classes: and Dr. Johnson thought it not in the

slightest degree indecorous to say to two young ladies who called upon him, 'Come, you pretty fools, dine with Maxwell and me at the Mitre;' to which the ladies, who wished to consult the philosopher upon the subject of Methodism, very readily assented. In the reign of the second George, and perhaps a little later, the great ladies, whether at taverns or in private houses, carried their vivacity somewhat farther than we should now think consistent with perfect propriety. Lady Coventry, at a great supper at Lord Hertford's 'said, in a very vulgar accent, if she drank any more she should be *muckibus*.' How the Americans of our own day must be shocked at the vulgarity of our aristocratic predecessors; for *they* will not tolerate even the word *drunk*, and describe the condition which that word conveys by the pretty epithet *excited*! We are adopting the term; and it may be expected that the refinement in our nomenclature may lead to a revival of a little of the old liberty in our practice. Walpole explains that *muckibus* was 'Irish for sentimental.' He did not foresee the change in our English. He calls things by their right names. He tells us that 'Lord Cornwallis and Lord Allen came drunk to the Opera;' and, what is harder to believe, that the chancellor, Lord Henley, being chosen a governor of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 'a smart gentleman who was sent with a staff carried it in the evening when the Chancellor happened to be drunk.' These exhibitions were in 1763.

We might believe, from the well-known lines of Pope, that the amusement which was invented for the solace of a mad king was the exclusive inheritance of an *aged* aristocracy:—

'See how the world its veterans rewards,
A youth of folly, an old age of cards.'

Not so. The cards were a part of the folly of youth as well as of age. Walpole never appears to have had the passion of a gambler; but we learn from his fifty years' correspondence that he was always well content to dabble

with cards and dice, and he records his winnings with a very evident satisfaction. The reign of *ombre*, whose chances and intrigues interested the great quite as much as the accidents and plots of the reign of Anne, was supplanted by the new dynasty of *whist*; and then *whist* yielded to the more gambling excitement of *loo*; to which *faro* succeeded; and the very cards themselves were at last almost kicked out by the ivory cubes, which disposed of fortunes by a more summary process. In 1742 *whist* was the mania, though Walpole voted it dull: 'Whist has spread a universal opium over the whole nation.' Again: 'The kingdom of the Dull is come upon earth. . . . The only token of this new kingdom is a woman riding on a beast, which is the mother of abominations, and the name in the forehead is Whist; and the four-and-twenty elders and the woman, and the whole town, do nothing but play with this beast.*' Whist had a long reign. In 1749 Walpole writes: 'As I passed over the green [Richmond], I saw Lord Bath, Lord Lonsdale, and half-a-dozen more of the White's club, sauntering at the door of a house which they have taken there, and come to every Saturday and *Sunday* to play at whist. You will naturally ask why they can't play at whist in London on those days as well as on the other five? Indeed I can't tell you, except that it is so established a fashion to go out of town at the end of the week, that people do go, though it be only into another town.†' Ministers of state, and princes who had something to do, were ready to relieve the cares of business by gambling, as much as other people gamed to vary their idleness. Lord Sandwich 'goes once or twice a week to hunt with the Duke [Cumberland]; and as the latter has taken a turn of gaming, Sandwich, to make his court—and fortune—carries a box and dice in his pocket; and so they throw a main, whenever the hounds are at fault, "upon every green hill, and under every green tree."‡' Five years later, at a magnificent ball and supper at Bedford House,

* Horace Walpole to Mann.

† Id., June 4, 1749.

‡ Id., January 31, 1750.

the Duke 'was playing at hazard with a great heap of gold before him: somebody said he looked like the prodigal son and the fatted calf, both.*' Amongst the royal and noble gamblers, swindlers *par excellence* sometimes found their way. There was a Sir William Burdett, whose name had the honour of being inscribed in the betting-room at White's as the subject of a wager that he would be the first baronet that would be hanged. He and a lady, 'dressed foreign as a princess of the house of Brandenburg,' cheated Lord Castledurrow and Captain Rodney out of a handsome sum at faro. The noble victim met the Baronet at Ranelagh, and thus apostrophised him: 'Sir William, here is the sum I think I lost last night; since that, I have heard that you are a professed pickpocket, and therefore desire to have no farther acquaintance with you.' The Baronet took the money with a respectful bow, and then asked his Lordship the further favour to set him down at Buckingham Gate, and without waiting for an answer whipped into the chariot.† No doubt the Baronet prospered and was smiled upon. Walpole tells another story of a hanger-on upon the gaming-tables, which has a dash of the tragic in it: 'General Wade was at a low gaming-house, and had a very fine snuff-box, which on a sudden he missed. Everybody denied having taken it: he insisted on searching the company. He did: there remained only one man, who had stood behind him, but refused to be searched, unless the General would go into another room alone with him. There the man told him that he was born a gentleman, was reduced, and lived by what little bets he could pick up there, and by fragments which the waiters sometimes gave him. "At this moment I have half a fowl in my pocket; I was afraid of being exposed: here it is! Now, sir, you may search me." Wade was so struck that he gave the man a hundred pounds.‡ The genius of gambling might be painted, like Garrick, between

* Horace Walpole to Bentley, 1755.

† Horace Walpole to Mann, 1748.

‡ Id., January 10, 1750.

the tragic and the comic Muse. We turn over the page, and Comedy again presents herself, in an attitude that looks very like the hoyden step of her half-sister, Farce: 'Jemmy Lumley last week had a party of whist at his own house: the combatants, Lucy Southwell, that curtsies like a bear, Mrs. Prijean, and a Mrs. Mackenzy. They played from six in the evening till twelve next day; Jemmy never winning one rubber, and rising a loser of two thousand pounds. How it happened I know not, nor why his suspicions arrived so late, but he fancied himself cheated, and refused to pay. However, *the bear* had no share in his evil surmises: on the contrary, a day or two afterwards, he promised a dinner at Hampstead to Lucy and her virtuous sister. As he went to the rendezvous his chaise was stopped by somebody, who advised him not to proceed. Yet, no whit daunted, he advanced. In the garden he found the gentle conqueress, Mrs. Mackenzy, who accosted him in the most friendly manner. After a few compliments, she asked him if he did not intend to pay her. "No, indeed, I sha'n't, I sha'n't; your servant, your servant." "Shan't you?" said the fair virago; and taking a horsewhip from beneath her hoop, she fell upon him with as much vehemence as the Empress-Queen would upon the King of Prussia, if she could catch him alone in the garden at Hampstead.*

There was deep philosophy in a saying of George Selwyn's, when a waiter at Arthur's Club-house was taken up for robbery: 'What a horrid idea he will give of us to the people in Newgate!' It may be doubted whether the gentlemen-highwaymen who peopled Newgate at that era had a much looser code of morals than some of the great folks they pillaged. The people of London got frightened about an earthquake in 1750, and again in 1756. There was a slight shock in the first of those years, which set the hunters of White's furiously betting whether it was an earthquake or the blowing-up of the powder-

* Horace Walpole to Montagu, May 14, 1761.

mills at Hounslow. Bishop Sherlock and Bishop Secker endeavoured to frighten the people into piety; but the visitors at Bedford House, who had supped and stayed late, went about the town knocking at doors, and bawling in the watchman's note, 'Past four o'clock and a dreadful earthquake.' Some of the fashionable set got frightened, however, and went out of town; and three days before the exact day on which the great earthquake was prophesied to happen, the crowd of coaches passing Hyde Park Corner with whole parties removing into the country was something like the procession already described to Vauxhall. 'Several women have made earthquake-gowns—that is, warm gowns to sit out of doors all to-night. These are of the more courageous. One woman, still more heroic, is come to town on purpose; she says all her friends are in London, and she will not survive them. But what will you think of Lady Catherine Pelham, Lady Frances Arundel, and Lord and Lady Galway, who go this evening to an inn ten miles out of town, where they are to play at brag till five in the morning, and then come back—I suppose to look for the bones of their husbands and families under the rubbish?*' When the rulers of the nation on such an occasion, or any other occasion of public terror, took a fit of hypocrisy and ordered a general fast, the gambling-houses used to be filled with senators who had a day of leisure upon their hands. Indifference to public opinion, as well as a real insensibility, drew a line between the people of fashion and the middle classes. Walpole tells a story which is characteristic enough to be true, though he hints that it was invented:—'They have put in the papers a good story made on White's: A man dropped down dead at the door, was carried in; the club immediately made bets whether he was dead or not; and when they were going to bleed him, the wagers for his death interposed, and said it would affect the fairness of the bet.† A great deal of

* Horace Walpole to Mann, April 2, 1750.

† Id. September 1, 1750.

this reckless spirit of gambling, which lasted through the century, and which probably has only clothed itself more decently in our own day, must be attributed to the great increase of the wealth of the aristocracy, through the natural effects of the great increase of the profitable industry of the middle classes. But it cannot be denied that much of the increase flowed back to the sources from which it was derived, in the form of bills, bonds, post-obits, and mortgages. The financial maxim of Charles Fox, that a man need never want money if he was willing to pay enough for it, tended to keep matters somewhat equal.

The idea from which we cannot escape when we trace the history of fashion in the middle of the last century, is, that the prevailing tone indicated something like a general moral intoxication. A succession of stimulants appears necessary to the upholding of social existence. This must be always in some degree the case with the rich and idle, whose vocation is chiefly to what they call pleasure. But we have few glimpses in the letters and memoirs of that period of the disposition to those calm domestic enjoyments which are principally derived from the cultivation of a taste for reading and the arts, and which, in our own day, equally characterises the middle and the upper classes. Of course, under the loosest state of manners, even in the profligate court of Charles II., there must have been many families of the upper ranks who despised the low vices and unintellectual excitements of their equals in birth; and under the most decorous and rational system of life there must be a few who would gladly restore a general licence, and who occasionally signalise themselves by some outbreak. But neither of these constitute a class. In the youth and middle age of Walpole the men and women of fashion appear to have lived without restraint imposed by their own sense of decorum, without apprehension of the opinions of their associates, without the slightest consideration for the good or evil word of the classes below them. 'In a regular monarchy the folly of the prince

gives the tone ; in a downright tyranny folly dares give itself no airs ; it is in a wanton overgrown commonwealth that *whim* and debauchery intrigue together.* Every lady or gentleman of spirit was allowed to have a *whim*, whether it inclined to gambling, or intrigue, or drunkenness, or riots in public places. What Walpole said of the Duke of Newcastle, that he looked like a dead body hung in chains always wanting to be hung somewhere else, gives one a notion of the perpetual restlessness of the fashionable class. The untiring activity of some leaders lasted a good deal longer ; and no doubt occasionally displays itself even now in a preternatural energy, which makes the cheek pale in the season of bloom and freshness. But there is now some repose, some intervals for reflection ; the moral intoxication does not last through sixteen of the four-and-twenty hours. The love of *sights*, the great characteristic of the vulgar of our own day, was emphatically the passion of the great in the last century. The plague was reported to be in a house in the City ; and fashion went to look at the outside of the house in which the plague was enshrined. Lady Milton and Lady Temple, on a night in March, put on hats and cloaks, and, sallying out by themselves to see Lord Macclesfield lie in state, ‘literally waited on the steps of the house in the thick of the mob, while one posse was admitted and let out again for a second to enter.’† The ‘mob’ (by which Walpole usually means an assemblage of people of any station below the aristocracy) paid back this curiosity with interest. The two Miss Gunnings lighted upon the earth of London in 1751, and were declared the handsomest women alive. ‘They can’t walk in the Park or go to Vauxhall, but such mobs follow that they are generally driven away.’ It is difficult to understand how a real plebeian mob should know anything about the Miss Gunnings, at a time when there were no paragraphs of personality in the meagre newspapers. The Gunning mob was probably a very courtly one. At any

* Horace Walpole to Mann.

† Horace Walpole to Lord Hertford, March 27, 1764.

rate the curiosity was in common between the high and the low. One of these fair ladies became Duchess of Hamilton. 'The world is still mad about the Gunnings: the Duchess of Hamilton was presented on Friday; the crowd was so great that even the noble mob in the drawing-room clambered upon chairs and tables to look at her. There are mobs at their doors to see them get into their chairs; and people go early to get places at the theatres when it is known they will be there.* Ten years later there was another great sight to which all resorted—the Cock-lane Ghost. How characteristic of the period is the following description of a visit to the den of the ghost!—'We set out from the opera, changed our clothes at Northumberland House, the Duke of York, Lady Northumberland, Lady Mary Coke, Lord Hertford, and I, all in one hackney-coach, and drove to the spot: it rained torrents; yet the lane was full of mob, and the house so full we could not get in; at last they discovered it was the Duke of York, and the company squeezed themselves into one another's pockets to make room for us. The house, which is borrowed, and to which the ghost has adjourned, is wretchedly small and miserable. When we opened the chamber, in which were fifty people, with no light but one tallow-candle at the end, we tumbled over the bed of the child to whom the ghost comes, and whom they are murdering by inches in such insufferable heat and stench. At the top of the room are ropes to dry clothes. I asked if we were to have rope-dancing between the acts? We had nothing. They told us, as they would at a puppet-show, that it would not come that night till seven in the morning, that is, when there are only 'prentices and old women. *We stayed, however, till half an hour after one.*† Imagine a prince of the blood, two noble ladies, a peer, and the son of a prime minister, packing in one hackney-coach from Northumberland House on a winter's night, and in a dirty lane near Smithfield watching till half past

* Horace Walpole to Mann, March 23, 1752.

† Horace Walpole to Montagu, February 2, 1762.

one by the light of a tallow-candle, amidst fifty of the 'unwashed,' for the arrival of a ghost! In those days the great patron of executions was the fashionable George Selwyn; and this was the way he talked of such diversions:—'Some women were scolding him for going to see the execution [of Lord Lovat], and asked him, "how he could be such a barbarian to see the head cut off?" "Nay," says he, "if that was such a crime, I am sure I have made amends, for I went to see it sewed on again." * When M'Lean, the highwayman, was under sentence of death in Newgate, he was a great attraction to the fashionable world. 'Lord Mountford, at the head of half White's, went the first day. * * * But the chief personages who have been to comfort and weep over this fallen hero are Lady Caroline Petersham and Miss Ashe.† These were the heroines of the minced chickens at Vauxhall; and we presume they did not visit the condemned cell to metamorphose the thief into a saint, as is the 'whim' of our own times. The real robbers were as fashionable in 1750 as their trumpery histories were in 1840. 'You can't conceive the ridiculous rage there is of going to Newgate; and the prints that are published of the malefactors, and the memoirs of their lives and deaths set forth with as much parade as—as—Marshal Turenne's—we have no generals worth making a parallel.‡ The visitors had abundant opportunities for the display of their sympathy:—'It is shocking to think what a shambles this country is grown! *Seventeen were executed this morning.*§ Amidst such excitements, who can wonder that a man of talent and taste, as Walpole was, should often prefer pasting prints into a portfolio, or correcting proofs, at 'poor little Strawberry!'

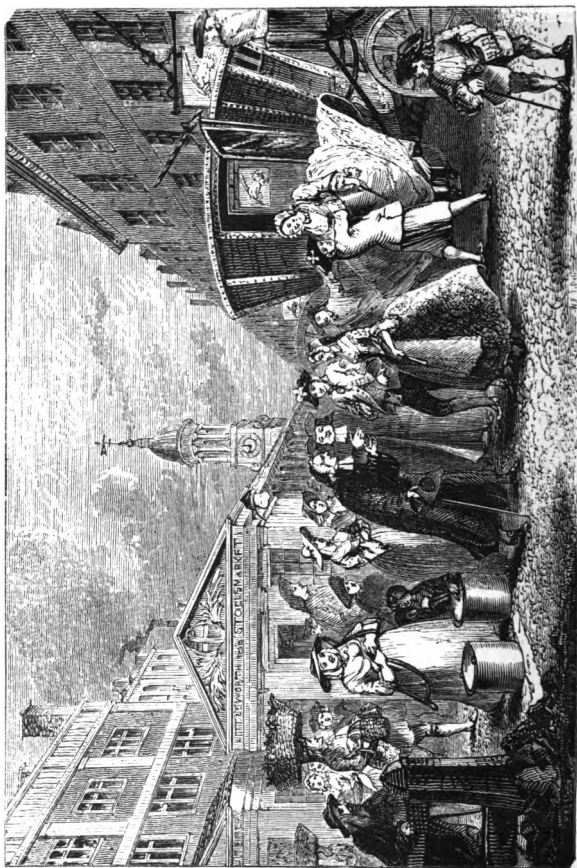
The reckless and improvident spirit of the period when Horace Walpole was an active member of the world of

* Horace Walpole to Conway, April 16, 1747.

† Horace Walpole to Mann, August 2, 1750.

‡ Id. October 18, 1750.

§ Id. March 23, 1752.



A Fleet Marriage-Party.—From a print of the time.—P. 843.

fashion is strikingly shown in the rash, and we may say indecent, manner in which persons of rank rushed into marriage. The happiness of a life was the stake which the great too often trusted to something as uncertain as the cast of a die or the turn-up of a trump. It seems almost impossible that in London, eighty or ninety years ago only, such a being as a Fleet parson could have existed, who performed the marriage ceremonial at any hour of the day or night, in a public-house or a low lodging, without public notice or public witnesses, requiring no consent of parents, and asking only the names of the parties who sought to be united. We might imagine, at any rate, that such irreverend proceedings were confined to the lowest of the people. The Fleet parsons had not a monopoly of their trade. In the fashionable locality of May Fair was a chapel in which one Keith presided, who advertised in the newspapers, and made, according to Walpole, 'a very bishopric of revenue.' This worthy was at last excommunicated for 'contempt of the Holy and Mother Church;' but the impudent varlet retaliated, and excommunicated at his own chapel Bishop Gibson, the Judge of the Ecclesiastical Court, and two reverend doctors. Keith was sent to prison, where he remained many years; but his shop flourished under the management of his shopmen, called Curates; and the public were duly apprised of its situation and prices:— 'To prevent mistakes, the little new chapel in May Fair, near Hyde Park Corner, is in the corner-house opposite to the City side of the great chapel, and within ten yards of it, and the minister and clerk live in the same corner-house where the little chapel is; and the licence on a crown stamp, minister and clerk's fees, together with the certificate, amount to one guinea, as heretofore, at any hour till four in the afternoon. And that it may be the better known, there is a porch at the door like a country church porch.*' Keith issued from his prison a manifesto against the Act to prevent clandestine marriages, to which

* Daily Post, July 20, 1744; quoted in Mr. Burn's valuable work on 'The Fleet Registers.'

we shall presently advert, in which he gravely puts forth the following recommendation of his summary process with reference to the lower classes :—‘ Another inconveniency which will arise from this Act will be, that the expense of being married will be so great that few of the lower class of people can afford ; for I have often heard a Fleet parson say that many have come to be married when they have had but half-a-crown in their pockets, and sixpence to buy a pot of beer, and for which they have pawned some of their clothes.’*

But exclusive fashion did not care to be exclusive in these practices. Sometimes a petticoat without a hoop was to be led by a bag-wig and sword to the May Fair altar, after other solicitations had been tried in vain. The virtue of the community was wonderfully supported by these easy arrangements, as Walpole tells us, in his best style : ‘ You must know, then—but did you know a young fellow that was called Handsome Tracy ? He was walking in the Park with some of his acquaintance, and overtook three girls ; one was very pretty : they followed them ; but the girls ran away, and the company grew tired of pursuing them, all but Tracy. He followed to Whitehall Gate, where he gave a porter a crown to dog them : the porter hunted them—he the porter. The girls ran all round Westminster, and back to the Haymarket, where the porter came up with them. He told the pretty one she must go with him, and kept her talking till Tracy arrived, quite out of breath, and exceedingly in love. He insisted on knowing where she lived, which she refused to tell him ; and, after much disputing, went to the house of one of her companions, and Tracy with them. He there made her discover her family, a butterwoman in Craven Street, and engaged her to meet him the next morning in the Park ; but before night he wrote her four love-letters, and in the last offered two hundred pounds a year to her, and a hundred a-year to Signora la Madre. Griselda

* Daily Post, July 20, 1744.

made a confidence to a staymaker's wife, who told her that the swain was certainly in love enough to marry her, if she could determine to be virtuous and refuse his offers. "Ay," says she, "but if I should, and should lose him by it!" However, the measures of the cabinet council were decided for virtue; and when she met Tracy the next morning in the Park, she was convoyed by her sister and brother-in-law, and stuck close to the letter of her reputation. She would do nothing; she would go nowhere. At last, as an instance of prodigious compliance, she told him, that if he would accept such a dinner as a butterwoman's daughter could give him, he should be welcome. Away they walked to Craven Street: the mother borrowed some silver to buy a leg of mutton, and kept the eager lover drinking till twelve at night, when a chosen committee waited on the faithful pair to the minister of May Fair. The doctor was in bed, and swore he would not get up to marry the king; but that he had a brother over the way who perhaps would, and who did.*

But 'the butterwoman's daughter' had no lack of high example to teach her how to make a short step into the matrimonial 'ship of fools.' The Fleet Registers, and those of May Fair, are rich in the names of Honourables and even of Peers. For example: 'February 14, 1752, James Duke of Hamilton and Elizabeth Gunning.' Walpole has a pleasant comment upon this entry. 'The event that has made most noise since my last, is the extempore wedding of the youngest of the two Gunnings, who have made so vehement a noise. . . . About a fortnight since, at an immense assembly at my Lord Chesterfield's, made to show the house, which is really most magnificent, Duke Hamilton made violent love at one end of the room, while he was playing at faro at the other end; that is, he saw neither the bank nor his own cards, which were of three hundred pounds each: he soon lost a thousand. . . . Two nights afterwards, he found himself so impatient, that he

* Horace Walpole to Montagu, Sept. 3, 1748.

sent for a parson. The doctor refused to perform the ceremony without licence or ring: the Duke swore he would send for the Archbishop. At last they were married with a ring of the bed-curtain, at half an-hour after twelve at night, at May Fair chapel.*

The people of rank at last grew frightened at their own practices. The Act against Clandestine Marriages came into operation on the 26th of March, 1754. On the 25th there were two hundred and seventeen marriages at the Fleet entered in one register; and on the same day sixty-one ceremonies of the like agreeable nature took place at May Fair. After the Act was passed in 1753 there was to be an interval of some months before its enactments were to be law. Walpole says, 'The Duchess of Argyle harangues against the Marriage Bill not taking place immediately, and is persuaded that all the girls will go off before next Lady Day.†

* Horace Walpole to Mann, Feb. 27, 1752.

† Horace Walpole to Montagu, July, 17, 1753.



Horace Walpole.

HORACE WALPOLE'S WORLD OF LETTERS.

LET us seat ourselves with Horace Walpole in his library at Strawberry Hill, and see the relation which the clever man of fashion bears to literature, and to the men of letters his contemporaries. There he sits, as he was painted by the poor artist Muntz, whom he patronised and despised, lounging in a luxurious arm-chair, soft and bright in its silk and embroidery, the window open, through which he occasionally looks on the green meadows and the shining river, in which he feels a half-poetical delight. He turns

to his elegant room, where 'the books are ranged within Gothic arches of pierced work, taken from a side door-case to the choir in Dugdale's St. Paul's.' The books themselves are a valuable collection, some for use and some for show; and it is easy to perceive that for the most part they have not been brought together as the mere furniture of the bookcases, but have been selected pretty much with reference to their possessor's tastes and acquirements. He is a man, then, of fortune, chiefly derived from sinecures bestowed upon him by his father; of literary acquirements far beyond the fashionable people of his day; with abundance of wit and shrewd observation; early in his career heartily tired of political intrigue, and giving up himself to a quiet life of learned leisure mixed with a little dissipation; and yet that man, pursuing this life for half a century, appears to have come less in contact with the greatest minds of his day than hundreds of his contemporaries of far inferior genius and reputation. With the exception perhaps of General Conway, Walpole has no correspondence with any of the really eminent public men of his time; and the most illustrious of his literary friends, after Gray is gone, are Cole, the dullest of antiquaries, and Hannah More. Warburton, in a letter to Hurd, terms Walpole 'an insufferable coxcomb;' and we have no doubt the bold churchman was right. Walpole was utterly destitute of sympathy, perhaps for the higher things of literature, certainly for the higher class of literary men. He had too much talent to be satisfied with the dullness and the vices of the people of fashion with whom he necessarily herded; but he had not courage enough to meet the more intellectual class upon a footing of equality. For the immediate purpose of this paper, it is of very little consequence what Walpole himself individually thinks of literature and men of letters; but it is of importance to show the relation in which the men of letters stood to the higher classes, and the lofty tone in which one whose passion was evidently the love of literary fame spoke of those to whom literature was a profession, and not an affair of smirking amateurship.

Pope had been dead two or three years when Horace Walpole bought Strawberry Hill: they were not therefore neighbours. In 1773, Walpole, speaking depreciatingly of his contemporaries, says, 'Recollect that I have seen Pope, and lived with Gray;' but he writes not a word to any one of what he had seen of Pope, and the only notice we have (except a party account of the quarrel between Pope and Bolingbroke) is, in 1742, of Cibber's famous pamphlet against Pope, which subsequently raised its author to be the hero of the 'Dunciad.' Walpole is evidently rubbing his hands with exultation when he says, 'It will notably vex him.' Pope died in 1744. Of the small captains who scrambled for the crowns of the realms of poetry, after the death of *this* Alexander, there ~~was~~ **was one** who founded a real empire—James Thomson. Walpole says, 'I had rather have written the ~~most~~ **most** absurd lines in Lee, than Leonidas or *The Seasons*; ~~as~~ I had rather be put into the round-house for a wrong-headed quarrel, than sup quietly at eight o'clock with ~~my~~ **my** grandmother. There is another of these tame geniuses, a Mr. Akenside, who writes Odes: in one he ~~has~~ **has** lately published he says, "Light the tapers, urge the fire." Had not you rather make gods jostle in the dark, than light the candles for fear they should break their heads?"* Gray, as every one knows, was Walpole's friend from boyhood. The young men quarrelled upon their travels, and after three years were reconciled. Walpole, no doubt, felt a sort of self-important gratification in the fame of Gray as a poet; yet, while Gray was alive, Walpole thus described his conversation: 'I agree with you most absolutely in your opinion about Gray; he is the worst company in the world. From a melancholy turn, from living reclusely, and from a little too much dignity, he never converses easily; all his words are measured and chosen, and formed into sentences: his writings are admirable; he himself is not agreeable.†' Yet Walpole was furious when Boswell's book came out, and Johnson is

* Horace Walpole to Mann, March 29, 1745.

† Horace Walpole to Montagu, Sept. 3, 1748.

made to say of Gray, 'Sir, he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere: he was dull in a new way, and that made many people think him great: he was a mechanical poet.' In 1791 Walpole writes, 'After the Doctor's death, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Boswell sent an ambling circular letter to me, begging subscriptions for a



Johnson. From a Portrait by Sir J. Reynolds.

monument for him—the two last, I think, impertinently, as they could not but know my opinion, and could not suppose I would contribute to a monument for one who had endeavoured, poor soul! to degrade my friend's superlative poetry. I would not deign to write an answer, but sent down word by my footman, as I would have done to parish officers with a brief, that I would not subscribe.* Walpole, we have little doubt, considered himself as the patron of Gray, and Johnson's opinion was an attack upon

* Horace Walpole to Miss Berry, May 26, 1791.

his *amour-propre*. His evident hatred of Johnson probably belonged as much to the order as to the individual. The poor man of genius and learning, who, by his stern resolves and dogged industry, had made himself independent of patronage, was a dangerous example. The immortal letter to Chesterfield on the dedication of the Dictionary was an offence against a very numerous tribe.

It is easy to understand from Walpole's letters, how an author, however eminent, was looked upon in society, except he had some adventitious quality of wealth or birth to recommend him. In 1766 Walpole thus writes to Hume: 'You know, in England, we read their works, but seldom or never take any notice of authors. We think them sufficiently paid if their books sell, and, of course, leave them to their colleges and obscurity, by which means we are not troubled with their vanity and impertinence. In France they spoil us, but that was no business of mine. I, who am an author, must own this conduct very sensible; for, in truth, we are a most useless tribe.' It is difficult to understand whether this passage is meant for insolence to the person to whom it is addressed: for what was Hume but an author? 'We read their works'—*we*, the aristocratic and the fashionable—to which class Hume might fancy he belonged, after he had proceeded from his tutorship to a mad lord into the rank of a *chargé d'affaires*. But then 'in France they spoil *us*;' here the aristocrat is coquetting with the honours of authorship in the face of his brother author. Perhaps the whole was meant for skilful flattery. Walpole's real estimate of the literary class is found in a letter to Cole, who was too obtuse to take any portion of the affront to himself:—'Mr. Gough wants to be introduced to me! He is so dull, that he would only be troublesome; and, besides, you know I shun authors, and would never have been one myself, if it obliged me to keep such bad company. They are always in earnest, and think their profession serious, and dwell upon trifles, and reverence learning. I laugh at all those things, and write only to laugh at them and divert myself. . . . Mr. Gough is very welcome to

see Strawberry Hill, or I would help him to any scraps in my possession that would assist his publication; though he is one of those industrious who are only re-burying the dead: but I cannot be acquainted with him. It is contrary to my system and my humour. . . . I have no thirst to know the rest of my cotemporaries, from the absurd bombast of Dr. Johnson, down to the silly Dr. Goldsmith; though the latter changeling has had bright gleams of parts, and the former had sense till he changed it for words, and sold it for a pension. Don't think me scornful. Recollect that I have seen Pope, and lived with Gray.*

Walpole was too acute not to admire Fielding; yet he evidently delights to lower the man, in the gusto with which he tells the following anecdote:—'Rigby and Peter Bathurst t'other night carried a servant of the latter's, who had attempted to shoot him, before Fielding; who, to all his other vocations, has, by the grace of Mr. Lyttelton, added that of Middlesex justice. He sent them word he was at supper—that they must come next morning. They did not understand that freedom, and ran up, where they found him banqueting, with a blind man, a ———, and three Irishmen, on some cold mutton and a bone of ham, both in one dish, and the dirtiest cloth. He never stirred nor asked them to sit. Rigby, who had seen him so often come to beg a guinea of Sir C. Williams, and Bathurst, at whose father's he had lived for victuals, understood that dignity as little, and pulled themselves chairs, on which he civilised.† Scott, in his life of Fielding, suggests that something of this anecdote may belong to the 'aristocratic exaggeration' of Walpole; and that the blind man might have been Fielding's brother, who was blind. In the same way the three Irishmen might not necessarily have been denizens of St. Giles's; and the female, whom Walpole designates by the most opprobrious of names, might have been somewhat more respectable than his own Lady Caro-

* Horace Walpole to Cole, April 27, 1773.

† Horace Walpole to Montagu, May 18, 1749.

line. We are not sure that, under the worst aspect, the supper at Fielding's was more discreditable than the banquet of minced chickens at Vauxhall. Fielding at this period, when his crime was a dirty table-cloth, thus writes of himself:—'By composing, instead of inflaming, the quarrels of porters and beggars, and by refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have had another left, I had reduced an income of about five hundred a year, of the dirtiest money upon earth, to little more than three hundred; a considerable portion of which remained with my clerk.'

Walpole himself, in the outset of his literary career, appears, as was to be expected from his temperament and education, miserable under what was then, and is now, called criticism. After the publication of the 'Royal and Noble Authors,' he writes, 'I am sick of the character of author; I am sick of the consequences of it; I am weary of seeing my name in the newspapers; I am tired with reading foolish criticisms on me, and as foolish defences of me; and I trust my friends will be so good as to let the last abuse of me pass unanswered.* If he had lived in these times, he might have been less thin-skinned. Those were not the days of critical newspapers; there was only an 'Evening Post,' and one or two other starveling journals. Those were the days when the old Duchess of Rutland, being told of some strange casualty, says, 'Lucy, child, step into the next room and set that down.' 'Lord, Madam,' says Lady Lucy, 'it can't be true.' 'Oh, no matter, child, it will do for news into the country, next post.† Horace Walpole might well have compounded for a little of the pert criticism of the reviews of his day, to be exempt from the flood of opinion which now floats the straws and rushes over the things which are stable. Fortunate was it for him and for us that he lived before the days of newspapers, or half he has told us would have been told in a perishable form. A Strawberry Hill man could not have existed in

* Horace Walpole to the Rev. Henry Zouch, May 14, 1759.

† Horace Walpole to Mann, Dec. 23, 1742.

the glare of journalising. He would have been a slave in the Republic of Letters, although he affected to despise Court slavery. He must, in the very nature of things, have been president and member of council of some half-dozen of the thousand and one societies with which London now abounds; and he would have had the satisfaction of walking in the *conversazione* horsemill of hot rooms and cold coffee three times a week during the season, amidst the same round of masks, all smiling, envious, jobbing, puffing, and be-puffed.* He was only familiar with one Society, the Antiquarian; and he thus speaks of it:—‘I dropped my attendance there four or five years ago, from being sick of their ignorance and stupidity, and have not been three times amongst them since.’ The Antiquarian Society then consisted of a few harmless and crotchety people, who wrote dull books which nobody read but themselves. But the dull men in time came to understand the full value of gregariousness; the name of Society at length became Legion; and literary and scientific London resolved itself into one mighty coterie, in which the ninety-nine dwarfs are put upon stilts, and the one of reasonable stature consents to move amongst them, and sometimes to prescribe laws, in the belief that he himself looms larger in the provincial distance. This clever organisation came after Walpole’s time. Possibly he might have liked the individual men of letters better, if the pretenders to literature, appending all sorts of cabalistic characters to their names, had set him up as their idol. As it was, there was a frank genial intercourse between the best men of his time, which was equally independent of puffing and patronage. The club life of the Burkes and Johnsons was precisely the opposite of the society life of our own days. We of course see nothing of the club life in Walpole’s writings; but it is a thing which has left enduring traces. Walpole was not robust enough to live in such an element.

* This was written twelve years ago. *Special Societies*, where men of real knowledge work harmoniously, have redeemed the name of Society from being synonymous with *clique*.

In the days when periodical criticism was in its nonage, men of letters naturally wrote to each other about the merits of new works. There is probably less of this in Walpole than in any other letter-writer equally voluminous; yet he sometimes gives us an opinion of a book, which is worth comparing with that more impartial estimate which is formed by an after-generation, when novelty and fashion have lost their influence, and prejudice, whether kind or hostile, ceases to operate. We may learn from the mistakes of clever men, as to the merits of their contemporaries, to be a little humble in forming our own opinions. Let us hear what Walpole has to say of Sterne:—‘At present, nothing is talked of, nothing admired, but what I cannot help calling a very insipid and tedious performance: it is a kind of novel, called ‘The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy;’ the great humour of which consists in the whole narration always going backwards. I can conceive a man saying that it would be droll to write a book in that manner, but have no notion in his persevering in executing it. It makes one smile two or three times at the beginning, but in recompense makes one yawn for two hours. The characters are tolerably kept up, but the humour is for ever attempted and missed.’* Gray, who by nature had a keen relish for humour, formed a juster opinion of Sterne, though he scarcely did him justice:—‘There is much good fun in “Tristram,” and humour sometimes hit, and sometimes missed.’ Goldsmith, who was probably jealous of the Yorkshire wit’s sudden reputation, called him ‘a very dull fellow,’ which Johnson denied; but Johnson himself disparaged Sterne almost as much as Walpole. Were any of these eminent men quite right in the matter? There were many reasons why Sterne should offend Johnson—reasons which have condemned him in our own day to neglect. But for real creative comic power he was never exceeded, but by *one* Englishman of our own day: his humour, as well as his pathos, has its roots in a rich poetical soil. Walpole,

* Horace Walpole to Sir David Dalrymple, April 4, 1760.

however, did not always set up *nîl admirari* as his motto. Thirty years after, Darwin arose; and he at once mounted like a balloon into the empyrean of popularity, and there collapsed. Walpole thus raves about the 'Botanic Garden':—'I send you the most delicious poem upon earth. If you don't know what it is all about, or why, at least you will find glorious similes about everything in the world,



Darwin.

and I defy you to discover three bad verses in the whole stack. Dryden was but the prototype of the "Botanic Garden" in his charming "Flower and Leaf;" and if he had less meaning, it is true he had more plan; and I must own, that his white velvets and green velvets, and rubies and emeralds, were much more virtuous gentlefolks than most of the flowers of the creation, who seem to have no fear of Doctors' Commons before their eyes. This is only the Second Part; for, like my king's eldest daughter in the "Hieroglyphic Tales," the First Part is not born yet:—no matter. I can read this over and over again for ever; for, though it is so excellent, it is impossible to remember anything so disjointed, except you consider it as a collection of short enchanting poems—as the Circe at her tremendous devilries in a church; the intrigue of the dear nightingale and rose;

and the description of Medea ; the episode of Mr. Howard, which ends with the most sublime of lines—in short, all, all, all is the most lovely poetry.* Darwin has utterly perished, and can never be resuscitated : his whole system of art was false. Walpole admired him because he was bred up in a school of criticism which regarded *style* as the one thing needful, and considered that the most poetical language which was the farthest removed from the language of common life : hence in some respects his idolatry of Gray, and his contempt of Thomson. Cowper, the only one poet of his later years who will live, is never once mentioned by him. The mode in which he addresses himself to Jephson, the author of ‘Braganza,’ and several other mouthing tragedies, appears to us now inexpressibly ridiculous : ‘You seem to me to have imitated Beaumont and Fletcher, *though your play is superior to all theirs*. You are so great a poet, sir, that you have no occasion to labour anything but your plots.’† This is the natural result of Walpole being brought up in the French school of criticism. His correspondence with Voltaire shows the process by which he was led to think that such a word-spinner as Robert Jephson, captain of foot, and a nominee of Lord Townshend in the Irish Parliament, imitated Beaumont and Fletcher, and produced a play superior to all theirs. In the preface to the second edition of ‘The Castle of Otranto,’ Walpole thus expressed himself in defence of his introduction into a serious romance of domestics speaking in common language : ‘That great master of nature, Shakspeare, was the model I copied. Let me ask if his tragedies of “Hamlet” and “Julius Cæsar” would not lose a considerable share of their spirit and wonderful beauties if the humour of the grave-diggers, the fooleries of Polonius, and the clumsy jests of the Roman citizens were omitted, or vested in heroics? Is not the eloquence of Antony, the nobler and affectedly-unaffected oration of Brutus, artificially exalted by the rude bursts of nature from the mouths of

* Horace Walpole to the Miss Berrys, April 28, 1789.

† Horace Walpole to Robert Jephson, Esq., October 17, 1777.

their auditors? These touches remind one of the Grecian sculptor, who, to convey the idea of a Colossus within the dimensions of a seal, inserted a little boy measuring his thumb. No, says Voltaire, in his edition of Corneille, this mixture of buffoonery and solemnity is intolerable. Voltaire is a genius—but not of Shakspeare's magnitude.' Three or four years after this Voltaire wrote a civil letter to Walpole on the subject of his 'Historic Doubts,' and Walpole, in reply, took occasion to apologise for the remarks he had made on Voltaire in the 'preface to a trifling romance.' Voltaire replied, defending his criticism; and the vindicator of Shakspeare is then prostrate at the feet of the Frenchman: 'One can never, sir, be sorry to have been in the wrong, when one's errors are pointed out to one in so obliging and masterly a manner. Whatever opinion I may have of Shakspeare, I should think him to blame if he could have seen the letter you have done me the honour to write to me, and yet not conform to the rules you have there laid down. When he lived, there had not been a Voltaire both to give laws to the stage, and to show on what good sense those laws were founded. Your art, sir, goes still further; for you have supported your arguments without having recourse to the best authority, your own works. It was my interest, perhaps, to defend barbarism and irregularity. A great genius is in the right, on the contrary, to show that when correctness, nay, when perfection is demanded, he can still shine, and be himself, whatever fetters are imposed on him. But I will say no more on this head: for I am neither so unpolished as to tell you to your face how much I admire you; nor, though I have taken the liberty to vindicate Shakspeare against your criticism, am I vain enough to think myself an adversary worthy of you. I am much more proud of receiving laws from you, than of contesting them. It was bold in me to dispute with you, even before I had the honour of your acquaintance: it would be ungrateful now, when you have not only taken notice of me, but forgiven me. The admirable letter you have been so good as to send me is a

proof that you are one of those truly great and rare men who know at once how to conquer and to 'pardon.*' It is evident from this letter that it was the merest egotism which originally led Walpole to set up for the defender of Shakspeare. Voltaire, in common with all the then French school, held that the language of princes and heroes must be sublime and dignified; or, in other words, they must utter a language not formed naturally and fitly either for the development of exalted passions or ordinary sentiments. Introduce the simple language of common life amongst this conventional dialogue, and an essential discord is necessarily produced. Voltaire, as all the other French dramatists have done, entirely banished the natural language, and fitted the waiting-maid with the same form of raving for the white handkerchief as they bestowed upon the princess. This was consistent. They fancied Shakspeare was inconsistent and barbarous when the comic came in contact with the serious, and the elevated was blended with the familiar. They did not see the essential difference between *their* heroic and *his* heroic. He never takes the sublime and the terrible out of the natural; and in the most agonising situation we encounter the most common images. Neither did Walpole see this essential distinction; and thus he has his ready echo of 'barbarism and irregularity.' Had he understood Shakspeare, he would not have yielded his position.

In his first letter to Voltaire, Walpole says, 'Without knowing it, you have been my master; and perhaps the sole merit that may be found in my writings is owing to my having studied yours.' The adroit Frenchman must have laughed a little at this compliment. Walpole was thinking of his letters, of which the world had then no knowledge. If Voltaire had turned to the works of the Strawberry Hill press, he would have seen little imitation either of his philosophy or of his style. Voltaire, the most subtle of scoffers, was upon occasions an enthusiast. He

* Horace Walpole to Voltaire, July 27, 1756.

had a heart. Walpole, even to his most intimate friends, was a scoffer and a scandal-monger; never moved to anything like warmth, except when talking about the constitution (by which he meant the protection of certain privileged persons in the exclusive enjoyment of public wealth and honour); and only growing earnest in his old age when he was frightened into hysterics about the French Revolution, having in his greener years called the death-warrant of Charles I. 'Charta Major.' He hates authors, as we have seen, because 'they are always in earnest, and think their profession serious.' If this be a true description of the authors of Walpole's time, the world has lost something by a change; for in our own day a writer who is in earnest is apt to be laughed at by those who conceive that the end of all literature is to amuse, and that its highest reward is to have, as Sterne had, 'engagements for three months' to dine somewhere, always provided that there is a lord's card to glitter in the exact spot of the library or drawing-room where the stranger eye can best read and admire. This is fame, and this is happiness. But the silent consolation of high and cheerful thoughts,—the right of entering at pleasure into a world filled with beauty and variety,—the ability to converse with the loftiest and purest spirits, who will neither ridicule, nor envy, nor betray their humble disciple,—the power of going out of the circle of distracting cares into a region where there is always calm and content,—these great blessings of the student's life, whether they end or not in adding to the stock of the world's knowledge, are not the ends which are most proposed according to the fashion of our day to a writer's ambition. The 'earnest author' is too often set down for a fool—not seldom for a madman.

To the class of writers that Walpole shunned Rousseau belonged, with all his faults. Walpole's adventures with this remarkable man are characteristic enough of the individual and of the times. His first notice of Rousseau is in a letter from Paris to Lady Hervey, in 1766:—'Mr. Hume carries this letter and Rousseau to England. I wish the

former may not repent having engaged with the latter, who contradicts and quarrels with all mankind in order to obtain their admiration. I think both his means and his end below such a genius. If I had talents like his, I should despise any suffrage below my own standard, and should blush to owe any part of my fame to singularities and affectations.' Walpole committed a mistake in not seeing that the singularities and affectations were an essential part of the man, and in not treating them therefore with charity and forbearance. After Rousseau had left Paris, Walpole, the hater of impostures, the denouncer of Chatterton as a forger and liar, wrote a letter, purporting to be from the King of Prussia to Rousseau, which had prodigious success in the French circles, and of course got into all the journals of Europe. This was at a time when the 'genius' was proscribed and distressed. Walpole was very proud to his confidential friends of the success of this hoax:—'I enclose a trifle that I wrote lately, which got about and has made enormous noise in a city where they run and cackle after an event, like a parcel of hens after an accidental husk of a grape.'* Walpole had no objection to Rousseau's principles; he insulted him because he was a vain man who affected singularity, or, what was more probable, could not avoid being singular. There was honesty at least in Johnson's denunciation of him:—'I think him one of the worst of men; a rascal, who ought to be hunted out of society, as he has been. Three or four nations have expelled him, and it is a shame that he is protected in this country. Rousseau, sir, is a very bad man. I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years. Yes, I should like to have him work in the plantations.' Johnson would have banished Rousseau to the plantations in talk, but assuredly would have given him a dinner in Bolt Court, and, if his poverty had become extreme, would have admitted him amongst his odd pensioners. Walpole's success in the pre-

* Horace Walpole to Chute, January, 1766.

tended letter was complete. He writes to Conway: 'As you know, I willingly laugh at mountebanks, political or literary, let their talents be ever so great The copies have spread like wildfire; *et me voici à la mode!*' Rousseau, in deep affliction, wrote a letter to the editor of the 'London Chronicle,' in which the fabrication had been printed, denouncing it as 'a dark transaction.' The vanity of Walpole, in regard to this letter, which consists of twenty lines in decent French, in which there is very little humour and no wit, is almost as insane as the vanity of Rousseau. He writes to Chute, to Conway, to Cole, to Gray, to all mankind, to tell of his wonderful performance. To Cole he says, 'You will very probably see a letter to Rousseau, in the name of the King of Prussia, writ to laugh at his affectations. It has made excessive noise here, and I believe *quite ruined the author* with many philosophers. When I tell you I was the author, it is telling you how cheap I hold their anger.*' When Rousseau had quarrelled with Hume, six months after, it was one of the unhappy man's suspicions that Hume was concerned in the letter from the King of Prussia; and then Walpole thus writes to Hume: 'I cannot be precise as to the time of my writing the King of Prussia's letter; but I do assure you with the utmost truth that it was several days before you left Paris, and before Rousseau's arrival there, of which I can give you a strong proof; for I not only suppressed the letter while you stayed there, out of delicacy to you, but it was the reason why, out of delicacy to myself, I did not go to see him, as you often proposed to me, thinking it wrong to go and make a cordial visit to a man, with a letter in my pocket to laugh at him.†' We have a suspicion that Walpole's delicacy was sometimes measured by his cowardice. Warburton, writing to Hurd, took a just view of the whole transaction: 'As to Rousseau, I entirely agree with you that his long letter to his brother philosopher, Hume, shows him to be a frank lunatic. His passion of tears, his suspicion of his friends in the midst of

* Horace Walpole to Cole, January 18, 1766.

† Horace Walpole to Hume, July 26, 1766.

their services, and his incapacity of being set right, all consign him to Monro. Walpole's pleasantry upon him had baseness in its very conception. It was written when the poor man had determined to seek an asylum in England, and is, therefore, justly and generously condemned by D'Alembert. This considered, Hume failed both in honour and friendship not to show his dislike; which neglect seems to have kindled the first spark of combustion in this madman's brain. However, the contestation is very amusing, and I shall be sorry if it stops, now it is in so good a train. I should be well pleased, particularly, to see so seraphic a madman attack so insufferable a coxcomb as Walpole; and I think they are only fit for one another.'

There can be no doubt that Walpole's coxcombity must have been 'insufferable' in his own day, except amongst a favoured few. It is perfectly clear, from his letters, that he had no reverence for anything—but himself. His affectation was as excessive as that of Rousseau; but it went in another direction. He fancied that he could afford to speak contemptuously of all political men; although, whilst himself a politician, he was the merest tool of party, and never made a single honest attempt to earn one penny of the thousands which the nation bestowed upon him. As a man of fashion, he was eternally holding up his friends to ridicule; though he went quite as far in their follies as a feeble frame would carry him. As a man of letters, he affected to despise nearly all other men of letters: what is there but affectation in thus writing to Hume—'My letter hinted, too, my contempt of learned men and their miserable conduct. Since I was to appear in print, I should not have been sorry that that opinion should have appeared at the same time. In truth, there is nothing I hold so cheap as the generality of learned men.'* What is the secret of all this affectation? He wanted a heart, and he thought it very clever to let the world know it; for he was deeply imbued with the low philosophy of his age, which thought

* Horace Walpole to Hume, November 6, 1766.

it wisdom to appear to love nothing, to fear nothing, to reverence nothing.

The world in Walpole's own day took up an opinion which it will not easily part with—that he behaved heartlessly to the unfortunate Chatterton. In March, 1769, when Chatterton was little more than sixteen years old, he addressed a letter from Bristol to Horace Walpole, offering to supply him with accounts of a succession of painters who had flourished at Bristol, which accounts, he said, had been discovered with some ancient poems in that city, specimens of which he enclosed. It was about six months before this that Chatterton had communicated to Felix Farley's 'Bristol Journal' his celebrated 'Description of the Friars first passing over the old bridge, taken from an ancient manuscript;' and very soon after the publication of that remarkable imitation of an ancient document, he produced, from time to time, various poems, which he attributed to Rowley, a priest of the fifteenth century, and which became the subject of the most remarkable literary controversy of modern times. Walpole replied to Chatterton's first communication with ready politeness; but when Chatterton solicited his assistance in quitting a profession which he disliked, his application was neglected, and the poor boy threw himself upon the world of London without a friend. He then demanded his manuscripts, in a letter which was too manly and independent to receive from Walpole any other name than 'impertinent.' The manuscripts were returned in a blank cover. This was the extent of Walpole's offence; and, looking at the man's character, it is impossible to think he could have acted otherwise. He probably doubted the ability of the friendless boy to furnish the information he required; he suspected that the papers sent to him were fabricated. When Chatterton wrote to him as one man of letters has a right to address another, he could not brook the assumed equality; and he revenged himself by the pettiness of aristocratic insolence. Had he sought out the boy who had given this evidence of his spirit as well as of his talent, he would not have been Horace

Walpole. The unhappy boy 'perished in his pride' in August, 1770. Walpole was assailed for many years for his conduct towards Chatterton, and he seems at times to have felt the charge very keenly. He thus addresses himself to the editor of Chatterton's *Miscellanies*: 'Chatterton was neither indigent nor distressed at the time of his correspondence with me; he was maintained by his mother, and lived with a lawyer. His only pleas to my assistance were, disgust to his profession, inclination to poetry, and communication of some suspicious MSS. His distress was the consequence of quitting his master, and coming to London, and of his other extravagances. He had depended on the impulse of the talents he felt for making impression, and lifting him to wealth, honours, and fame. I have already said that I should have been blameable to his mother and society if I had seduced an apprentice from his master to marry him to the nine Muses; and I should have encouraged a propensity to forgery, which is not the talent most wanting culture in the present age.' In 1777, when the 'Monthly Review' had been attacking him on the subject of Chatterton, he thus wrote to Cole: 'I believe M'Pherson's success with "Ossian" was more the ruin of Chatterton than I. Two years passed between my doubting the authenticity of Rowley's poems and his death. I never knew he had been in London till some time after he had undone and poisoned himself there. The poems he sent me were transcripts in his own hand, and even in that circumstance he told a lie: he said he had them from the very person at Bristol to whom he had given them.' In this letter he adds, 'I think poor Chatterton was an astonishing genius.' Walpole does not appear to have seen that he was in this dilemma: either the poems which he had received from Chatterton were authentic, and, if so, the greatest curiosities in our language; or they were fabricated by an 'astonishing genius.' Walpole, we believe, did not see the extraordinary merit of the poems. His taste was not of the highest quality. When the world agreed that a great spirit had been amongst them, and had perished untimely, Wal-

pole, in self-defence, dwelt upon his 'forgery' and his 'impositions.' He probably forgot that a work had been published in 1765, under the following title—'The Castle of Otranto, a Story translated by William Marshal, Gent., from the original Italian of Ouphrio Muralto, Canon of the Church of St. Nicholas at Otranto:' and that the preface to this translation from the Italian thus commences—'The following work was found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England. It was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529.' Who can say that, if Chatterton had lived, he would not have avowed the Rowley poems to be his own, as Walpole afterwards acknowledged the 'Castle of Otranto?' And where, then, would have been the forgery any more than in the fabrication of the 'Canon of the Church of St. Nicholas?'

Ten years after Chatterton's death Walpole quieted his conscience by continuing to call the marvellous charity-boy 'young villain' and 'young rascal,' but an occasion rose in which genius might be patronised without incurring the risk of an impertinent letter. Miss Hannah More had found a milk-woman at Bristol who wrote verses; and they were just such verses as Hannah More and Horace Walpole would think very wonderful; so a subscription is to be raised for the milk-woman, Mistress Ann Yearsley. 'Her ear,' according to a letter of Walpole to Miss More in 1784, 'is perfect,' her 'taste' is unexceptionable. Walpole prescribes her studies: 'Give her Dryden's "Cock and Fox," the standard of good sense, poetry, nature, and ease. . . . Prior's "Solomon" (for I doubt his "Alma," though far superior, is too learned for her limited reading) would be very proper. . . . Read and explain to her a charming poetic familiarity called the "Blue-stocking Club."'

Imagine that poor Chatterton had been more unfortunate than he really was—*had* been patronised by Horace Walpole, permitted a garret to sleep in, advanced to the honours of the butler's table, and taught by the profound critic, that Spenser was wretched stuff, and Shakspeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' 'forty

'times more nonsensical than the worst translation of any Italian opera-books.*' The milk-woman became restive under the control of Hannah More, and she quarrelled with her patroness, upon which afflicting occurrence Walpole thus condoles with his friend: 'You are not only benevolence itself, but, with fifty times the genius of a Yearsley, you are void of vanity. How strange that vanity should expel gratitude! Does not the wretched woman owe her fame to you, as well as her affluence? I can testify your labours for both. Dame Yearsley reminds me of the Troubadours, those vagrants whom I used to admire till I knew their history; and who used to pour out trumpery verses, and flatter or abuse accordingly as they were housed and clothed, or dismissed to the next parish. Yet you did not set this person in the stocks, after procuring an annuity for her!† It is impossible to have a clearer notion of what Walpole and such as Walpole meant by patronage. The Baron of Otranto would have thought it the perfection of benevolence to have housed and clothed a troubadour; but the stocks and the whipping-post would have been ready for any treasonable assertion of independence. The days of chivalry are gone, and, heaven be praised, those of patronage are gone after them!

Walpole, like many other very clever men, could not perfectly appreciate the highest excellence, and yet could see the ridiculous side of the pretenders to wit and poetry. He laughs, as Gifford laughed, at 'Della Crusca;' and he has told the follies of Batheaston with his characteristic liveliness:—

'You must know that near Bath is erected a new Parnassus, composed of three laurels, a myrtle-tree, a weeping-willow, and a view of the Avon, which has been new-christened Helicon. Ten years ago there lived a Madam Riggs, an old rough humourist who passed for a wit; her daughter, who passed for nothing, married to a Captain Miller, full of good-natured officiousness. These good

* Horace Walpole to Bentley, February 23, 1755.

† Horace Walpole to Hannah More, October 14, 1787.

folks were friends of Miss Rich, who carried me to dine with them at Batheaston, now Pindus. They caught a little of what was then called taste, built and planted, and begot children, till the whole caravan were forced to go abroad to retrieve. Alas! Mrs. Miller is returned a beauty, a genius, a Sappho, a tenth Muse, as romantic as Mademoiselle Scuderi, and as sophisticated as Mrs. Vesey. The captain's fingers are loaded with cameos, his tongue runs over with *virtù*, and, that both may contribute to the improvement of their own country, they have introduced *bouts-rimés* 'as a new discovery. They hold a Parnassus fair every Thursday, give out rhymes and themes, and all the flux of quality at Bath contend for the prizes. A Roman vase, dressed with pink ribbons and myrtles, receives the poetry, which is drawn out every festival; six judges of these Olympic games retire and select the brightest compositions, which the respective successful acknowledge, kneel to Mrs. Calliope Miller, kiss her fair hand, and are crowned by it with myrtle—with—I don't know what. You may think this is fiction or exaggeration. Be dumb unbelievers! The collection is printed, published. Yes, on my faith, there are *bouts-rimés* on a buttered muffin, made by Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland; receipts to make them, by Corydon the venerable, alias George Pitt; others, very pretty, by Lord Palmerston; some by Lord Carlisle; many by Mrs. Miller herself, that have no fault but wanting metre; and immortality promised to her without end or measure. In short, since folly, which never ripens to madness but in this hot climate, ran distracted, there never was anything so entertaining or so dull—for you cannot read so long as I have been telling.* When poetry was essentially an affair of 'hearts' and 'darts,' it was no wonder that a mob of silly fashionable people set up for poets. The whole age was wanting in taste: it was not poetical because it was superficial.

* Horace Walpole to Conway, Jan. 15, 1775.

The intercourse between Hannah More and Horace Walpole began in 1781. It was an odd intimacy; but compliments freely received and bestowed made it agreeable, no doubt, to both parties. Here is a pretty note from Horace Walpole, written with a crowquill pen upon the sweetest-scented paper: 'Mr. Walpole thanks Miss More a thousand times, not only for so obligingly complying with his requests, but for letting him have the satisfaction of possessing and reading again and again her charming and very genteel poem, the "Bas Bleu." He ought not, in modesty, to commend so much a piece in which he himself is flattered; but truth is more durable than blushing, and he must be just, though he may be vain.* Walpole could bear flattery better than Dr. Johnson: 'Mrs. Thrale then told a story of Hannah More, which, I think, exceeds in its severity all the severe things I have yet heard of Dr. Johnson's saying. When she was introduced to him, not long ago, she began singing his praise in the warmest manner, and talking of the pleasure and the instruction she had received from his writings, with the highest encomiums. For some time he heard her with that quietness which a long use of praise has given him: she then redoubled her strokes, and, as Mr. Seward calls it, peppered still more highly, till at length he turned suddenly to her, with a stern and angry countenance, and said, "Madam, before you flatter a man so grossly to his face, you should consider whether or not your flattery is worth his having."† As Miss More grew older she, no doubt, grew wiser; and Walpole himself, with a very prevailing inclination to ridicule what he called her saintliness, came to respect her for her virtues, instead of continuing to burn incense to her genius. The last indication of their friendship appears in his giving her a Bible, which she wished he would read himself.

* Horace Walpole to Hannah More, May 6, 1784.

† Madame d'Arblay's Diary, vol. i. p. 103.



Boswell.

FANNY BURNEY AT COURT.

It is 1779. There is an amusing scene in Mr. Thrale's villa at Streatham. The house, as usual, is full of company. Mr. Boswell, who has recently arrived in London, comes for a morning visit; and what was then called a 'collation' is ordered. The sprightly hostess takes her seat, with Dr. Johnson on her right. Next him is a vacant chair, which Boswell is about to occupy, according to his wont, as the *umbra* of his illustrious friend. Mr. Seward interferes with—'Mr. Boswell, that seat is Miss Burney's.' Into the chair slides 'the little Burney;' and the good Doctor rolls about, and glares upon Fanny with his large one eye, and caresses her as he would a petted child. Boswell is mad with jealousy. He will not eat; he takes no place at the table; but seizes a chair, and plants himself behind the sage and his *protégée*. There is a laugh and a whisper about 'Bozzy,' when another wig is

thrust between the Doctor's wig and the lady's powdered *toupet*. Terrible is the reproof: 'What do you do here, sir? Go to the table, sir. One would take you for a Brangton.'—'A Brangton, sir? What is a Brangton, sir?'—'What company have you kept not to know that, sir?' Poor Boswell is soon informed. Brangton is the name of a vulgar family in 'Evelina;' and the little lady who has dispossessed him of the place of honour is the authoress of that novel.

Four years pass on, and Boswell knows his cue better. He calls at Johnson's house, and finds him at tea with 'the celebrated Miss Burney.' He is evidently in the way. Johnson, in answer to something about parliamentary speakers, says, 'Why do you speak here? Either to instruct or entertain, which is a benevolent motive; or for distinction, which is a selfish motive.' The canny Scot disarms him—he mentions 'Cecilia;' and then Johnson, with an air of animated satisfaction, as the biographer records—'Sir, if you talk of "Cecilia," talk on.'

The gentleness to Fanny, and the roughness to Bozzy, are all over. Johnson has pressed her hand for the last time, and said '*Ah, priez Dieu pour moi.*'

It is the 16th of December, 1785, and 'the celebrated Miss Burney' is on a visit to Mrs. Delany, at Windsor. This is the widow of Dr. Delany, the friend and panegyrist of Swift; so that she formed a link between the times of George the Third and the times of Anne. The King had given Mrs. Delany the occupation of a small house close by the Royal Lodge at Windsor; and he would occasionally walk in for a gossip with the ancient lady. The Queen, too, would sometimes come. Fanny Burney had been in a flutter for many days about these visits, ready to fly off if any one knocked at the street door. On this wintry afternoon she is in the drawing-room, with Mrs. Delany's niece, and a little girl, playing at puss-in-the-corner. Without any announcement, the door opens, and a large man, in deep mourning, enters, shutting the door himself. The niece exclaims, 'Aunt, the King, the

King;' and the kittens rush to the sides of the room, as if they had been mice, and a real grimalkin had appeared amongst them. Fanny is planted against the wall, and she says, that she hoped to glide out of the room; but Majesty asks, 'Is that Miss Burney?' And then, Miss Burney—standing against the wall, as everybody else stood, with the exception of the venerable lady—had, after sundry



George III.

royal monologues about James's powder, and whooping-cough, and rheumatism, the happiness (for who can doubt that it was happiness?) to hear the King begin to talk about 'Evelina;' and how she never told her father about the book. Then the King, coming up close, said, 'But what? what? how was it?'—'Sir!'—'How came you? how happened it? what? what?'—'I—I—only wrote, sir, for my own amusement, only in some odd idle hours.'—'But your publishing, your printing, how was that?'—'That was, sir, only because ——' 'What?'—'I thought, sir, it would look very well in print.'—'Ha! ha! very fair, indeed! that's being very fair and honest!'

Now comes the Queen—and then the King repeats all that he had said, and all that Miss Burney had said—and coming up to the bewildered maiden again, asks, ‘Are you musical?’—‘Not a performer, sir.’ The King crosses to the Queen, and communicates the fact. But the royal curiosity is not quite satisfied. ‘Are you sure you never play? never touch the keys at all?’—‘Never to acknowledge it, sir.’—‘Oh that’s it;’ and he imparts to the Queen, ‘She does play, but not to acknowledge it.’ There is then a great deal of talk in the middle of the room—while those against the wall answer if spoken to—when the Queen, in a low voice, says, ‘Miss Burney;’—and upon Miss Burney coming up to her, whispers—“But shall we have no more—nothing more?” and Fanny cannot but understand her, and shakes her head.

We see the shadow of ‘little Burney,’ as she writes twenty pages of her diary on that eventful evening, smiling with ineffable happiness, and, we almost fear, forgetting that she had lived with those whose commendation was worth—shall we say it?—almost as much as ‘the excessive condescension’ to the authoress standing against the wall in Mrs. Delany’s drawing-room.

In July 1786, Miss Burney has attained, in the view of the world, a high promotion. She is of the Queen’s household. She has a drawing-room and a bed-room in the Lodge at Windsor; a footman, and two hundred a year. Is the authoress of ‘*Evelina*’ a confidential amanuensis,—or English reader—or instructress of a Princess? We see her shadow in the unvarying course of her daily life.

Fanny rises at six o’clock. She dresses in a morning-gown and cap, and waits her first summons. What summons her? A bell. ‘The celebrated Miss Burney,’ for a considerable time, can never hear that bell without a start, and a blush of conscious shame at her own strange degradation. These are her own words. Poor little Burney! Your father, we would fain believe, forced you to wear these chains of servitude; or perhaps you thought that to

wait upon a 'sweet Queen' as a lady's maid—yes, Fanny, a lady's maid, nothing more nor less—was to be a bright fairy dressing a born princess all in silk and diamonds for a ball, where the fairy herself might sometimes dance. It is really very prosaic work. Miss Burney has a helper—one Mrs. Thielky; but there is also a lady above her in



Queen Charlotte.

office, one Mrs. Schwollenberg. Between seven and eight o'clock there is the Queen's morning dressing. Mrs. Thielky hands 'the things,' and Fanny puts them on. At a quarter before one begins the dressing for the day. Fanny ought to be dressed herself before she enters the royal presence; but, we grieve to say, she is often unpunctual and half-unpowdered. Perhaps she has been musing over the remembrance of the wisdom of Burke, or the kindness of Reynolds, rapt in a dream of the old familiar faces. The bell rings, and she must go. Mrs. Schwollenberg is there, and Mrs. Thielky; and they help the Queen off with her gown, and on with her powdering things, and then the hair-dresser is admitted; the Queen reading the newspaper during the operation. At three o'clock the ceremony is finished; and 'the celebrated authoress' has actually two

hours of freedom. Is she jotting down notes for 'Camilla,' or does she get a breezy walk in the Little Park, shaded from that July sun by those o'er-arching elms, solemn as a cathedral aisle—as solemn, but how much more sweet! Poor Fanny! she also has had to put on her powdering things—the hair-dresser has been with her also a little after noon, and she has had no leisure to read the newspaper. She must sit still, lest the curls should be deranged, till she goes to dine with cross Mrs. Schwellenberg, punctually at five. No wonder that she gives way to dejection of spirits, and mopes over her diary. For three hours Fanny is *tête-à-tête* with the superior lady of the dressing-room mysteries, who propitiates the novice after this fashion: 'I tell you once, I shall do for you what I can; you are to have a gown. The Queen will give you a gown! The Queen says you are not rich.' Fanny pouts: 'I have two new gowns, and therefore do not require another.'—'Miss Bernar, I tell you once, when the Queen will give you a gown, you must be humble, thankful.' Poor little Burney! At eight o'clock the Equerry-in-waiting comes to tea in Mrs. Schwellenberg's room, and with him any gentlemen that the King or Queen may have invited for the evening. Fanny, for an hour, is in good society, as the world terms it; but it is not quite the society to which she has been accustomed. There is General Budé, with a sneer in his smile that looks sarcastic; but Major Price is kind and good-humoured; and Colonel Goldsworthy, although a man of but little cultivation or literature, delights in a species of dry humour. An occasion arrives for the 'celebrated authoress' to form a 'grand design.' Her superior is left in London, and the presidency of the tea-table devolves upon Miss Burney. She determines to cut the Equerries, and goes out; she had no official commands to make tea for them. The man of little literature is angry, and Miss Burney gets through the affair very awkwardly. Fanny! you are tethered, you had better not tug at the chain. The 'sweet Queen' is very condescending; but she rarely lets Miss Burney forget that she is there as the servant, and not as the novel-writer. The Queen

has gone out early with the King, and Miss Burney thinks she may have a long walk: she is too late for the noon-tide dressing; but she rushes into the room where Majesty is already under the hands of the hair-dresser, with no Burney to have disrobed her. 'Where have you been, Miss Burney?' It was small compliment to the authoress of 'Evelina,' when the thunder-cloud had passed, to be told to look at Lady Frances Howard's gown, and see if it was not very pretty. But the poor thing receives it as kindness, and dries her tears. It was kindness. The Queen is really kind to her; but, within that circle, there is an end of free will. The condition of existence in those dreary walls is unmitigated slavery. The very highest are the slaves of their own forms; their attendants, from the Lady of the Bedchamber to Miss Burney 'the dresser,'—from the Lord Chamberlain to Colonel Goldsworthy the Equerry—are equally slaves. The man of dry humour thus describes the life which would have killed Major Price, if he had not resigned: 'Riding, and walking, and standing, and bowing, —what a life it is! Well; it's honour! that's one comfort; one has the honour to stand till one has not a foot left; and to ride till one's stiff, and to walk till one's ready to drop; and then one makes one's lowest bow, d'ye see, and blesses one's-self with joy for the honour.' Fanny is never invited to hear the evening concert; but Colonel Goldsworthy tells her how those who do hear it have to stand in an outer room for two hours. To be able to stand for hours without dropping, to walk out of a room backwards, and never to cough or sneeze—these were the qualifications for a court life, in the absence of which no talent and no virtue would be equivalents.

We see the shadow of Fanny Burney, as, on two occasions, separated by an interval of less than three months, she walks on Windsor Terrace.

On the 21st of May, 1786—five months after the introduction to royalty at Mrs. Delany's—Doctor Burney, who is desirous to be appointed Master of the King's Band when the decease should ensue of the then master, is thus advised:

‘Take your daughter in your hand, and walk upon the terrace; the King will understand.’ The King was well experienced in such hints. Was the Bishop of A—— ‘in declining health,’—unquestionably the Very Reverend the Dean of B—— would be on Windsor Terrace with his daughter. Was ‘Gold Stick’ confined to his bed—‘Silver Stick’ would soon be shining on Windsor Terrace. We have seen the process in our boyhood, some twenty-five years later than the Sunday evening on which Miss Burney stood to attract notice in this ‘Vanity Fair.’ It was a curious scene. About five o’clock, carriage after carriage began to roll up the Castle hill. That hill was then a sort of street, with house after house, close up to the ugly barrack, called the Lodge, which Sir William Chambers had erected opposite the great southern gate of the Castle. That lodge was the seat of Fanny Burney’s griefs. It was separated from the road to the terrace by an enclosed lawn. The eastern terrace was the great point of attraction. Here the aspirants for royal smiles clustered on benches placed under the Castle windows, whilst the commonalty were happy to get a seat on the low wall that looked down upon what was then a smooth turf, but now a garden. There is a sudden hush; a door is opened, and Majesty is seen descending the steps. The bands burst out with ‘God save the King!’ the multitude are uncovered. Fanny has not arrived quite in good time; but she is brought with Lady Louisa Clayton, and a place is obtained. Up and down walk the King and Queen, and the Princesses, and the Equerries; the crowd squeeze themselves into the narrowest space as they come, and close in after they have passed. Fanny is shy, and draws her hat over her face; she thinks her real errand will be suspected; but her *chaperon* puts her forward. The King has his how d’ye do—and when did you come—and how long shall you stay—and when do you come again—and—happy little Burney—‘Pray, how goes on the Muse?’—‘Not at all, sir.’—‘No! But why? why not?’—‘I—I—I am afraid, sir.’—‘And why? of what?’—and the King pokes his head under her hat—‘Oh! she’s

afraid.' Doctor Burney had no word—and he didn't get the place.

It is the 7th of August of the same year—the birthday of the little Princess Amelia. All the royal family are 'new dressed;' people of distinction come to the terrace as to a drawing-room. Miss Burney, too—who is now one of the Queen's attendants—is new dressed; and why should she not go to the terrace? She does go with Mrs. Delany. The King stops to speak to the good old lady—and he once or twice addresses her companion. The Queen—when her attendant catches her eye—expresses, by one look of surprise, that she ought not to have been there. Fanny, in a flutter, kisses the little Princess of three years old—and before the people of distinction, too! In truth, Miss Burney, you are much too impulsive; three months have made a great difference in your position, which you rather fail to comprehend. A mischievous Quarterly Reviewer—who found out that you were five-and-twenty, and not seventeen, when you wrote 'Evelina'—says, with the courtliest of airs, that your chief if not sole recommendations to the royal favour were your 'literary merits,' and your 'personal manners!' No doubt, you presumed upon those qualities, sometimes—and it was long before you were aware that they were not wanted in your position.

'Literary merits' have not very often public recognition, and when a demonstration comes it is generally embarrassing. There was a time when Miss Burney, with the Montagues and Thrales about her, would have sat calmly in a box at the theatre, and received, without much blushing, a tribute to her reputation. She is now in the Equerries' box—the balcony box—at one of the great theatres, in the front row; the Royal Family and their suite immediately opposite. The second Lady of the Robes has been kindly permitted a few hours of relaxation. Miss Farren comes on to speak the epilogue to a new play. Fanny leans forward with her opera-glass, intent upon the graceful actress. There is a compliment to female writers, and she listens with breathless attention. What? Is it herself—who

has been doomed to hear, from rude Mrs. Schwellenberg, that she 'hates all novels'—to whom these two lines apply?

'Let sweet Cecilia gain your just applause,
Whose every passion yields to Nature's laws.'

The King raises his opera-glass to look at her, and laughs immoderately; the Queen looks up too; the Princesses look; the maids of honour look. Fanny puts up her fan, and sits back for the rest of the night. Popular applause—and that midnight 'bell' when she returns to the palace!

We have read the 'Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay,' with a real feeling of pity for her in those Miss Burney days at Windsor, and Kew, and Buckingham Palace. Never was a flattered and petted lady—the most successful writer of fiction in an age when authoresses were few—subjected to such bitter mortifications, as in those two or three years of her imprisonment in that waiting-maid life. We see her restless shadow as she enters, with the royal *cortège*, an unbidden guest, into the halls of Nuneham; no servant to show her to her room—no welcome—no offered refreshment. Plain Mrs. Schwellenberg gives her a premonition when, with her own pretensions as Miss Burney, she tells the German lady that she has been introduced to Lord Harcourt at Sir Joshua Reynolds's: —'Oh! it is the same—that is nothing—when you go with the Queen, it is enough; they might be civil to you for that sake. You might go quite without no, what you call, fuss; you might take no gown but what you go in; that is enough—you might have no servant—for what? You might keep on your riding-dress. There is no need you might be seen. I shall do everything I can to assist you to appear for nobody.' Literary merits, and personal manners!—put them up in lavender, Miss Burney; they will not wear well here with the new gown that the Queen gives you.

It is the 1st of January, 1787, and Fanny Burney is entering a wise resolve in her diary: 'I opened the new year with what composure I could acquire. I considered

it as the first year of my being settled in a permanent situation, and made anew the best resolutions I was equal to forming, that I would do what I could to curb all spirit of repining, and to content myself calmly, unresistingly at least, with my destiny.' She has mistaken the real nature of the 'permanent situation.' It is no fault of hers that she is unfitted for it; it is no fault of her royal benefactors—for they wished to be so—that her promotion is degradation. Her destiny is an unnatural one, and she *must* repine. The *habitués* of a court have their own exclusive associations of rank and ambition, of fashion and parade, to console them for the inconveniences of the 'honour' in which they live. But the literary lady's-maid—what sympathy has she? The Queen is condescending, but reserved; the King has his what? what? as he has with every one; the Princesses are affable; the Equerries are polite; celebrities, though of a somewhat heavy character, come sometimes to the tea-room—Mr. De Luc the geologist, Mr. Bryant the mythologist, and Dr. Herschel the astronomer. But she meets Thomas Warton, the poet, in a hasty walk, and she must turn a deaf ear to his raptures, for she dare not ask him to her room. No man must come there; no lady, not in the permitted list. Her correspondence with Madame de Genlis is forbidden. She is allowed to attend one day at the trial of Warren Hastings. Edmund Burke—a name that then stank in the court nostrils—espies her, and places himself by her side. Oh, Fanny, there are eyes upon you! You stammer as your old friend—the greatest man of his time—looks in your unaccustomed face with a familiar look of sincere affection. The tie is broken. He is the same; but you must wear a mask.

We see the shadow of Fanny Burney as illness gradually steals upon her. It must come. If she does not send that letter of resignation so often proposed, there will be a tear or two in the Lodge at Windsor for the little woman that was so clever and so pleasant, and yet so fidgety and unhappy. What could have ailed her? She had 'two new gowns and everything handsome' about her. The letter

was sent ; and Fanny soon grew well at Norbury park, and wrote 'Camilla,' and married a pleasant *émigré*, and had a cottage of her own in the lovely valley of the Mole, and died at near ninety. We hope she was more at home in a foreign land than in that ugly Lodge at Windsor, of which, most happily, not a brick is left.

THE FARMER'S KITCHEN.

DOES any one now read 'The Farmer's Boy,' by Robert Bloomfield? I have before me the edition of 1803, at which time it is recorded that twenty-six thousand copies had been sold since the first publication of the poem in 1800. Byron has left a contemptuous notice of Bloomfield in the 'English Bards.' But 'The Farmer's Boy,' for all that, will not be wholly forgotten. It is a truthful poem, founded upon accurate observation of common things, and describing the most familiar incidents and feelings with a rare fidelity—rare, amidst the conventional generalities of the verse-making of that day. At a very early age I had means of testing the truth of its descriptions. Let me give, from my own recollections, a picture of a farmer's household, not long after the time when Bloomfield's poem was first published.

On one of the roads from Windsor to Binfield, in the parish of Warfield, stands, or stood, a small farm-house, with gabled roof and latticed windows. A rude woodbine-covered porch led into a broad passage, which would have been dark had not the great oaken door generally stood open. To the right of the passage was a large kitchen, beyond which loomed a sacred room—the parlour—unopened except on rare occasions of festivity. To this grange I travelled in a jolting cart, on a spring afternoon, seated by the side of the good wife, who had carried her butter and eggs and fowls to market, and was now returning home, proud of her gains, from whose accumulations she boasted that she well-nigh paid the rent of the little farm. I was in feeble health; and a summer's run was decreed for me, out of the way of school and books. My life for six months was very like playing at Farmer's Boy.

That small bed-room where I slept, with its worm-eaten floor and undraped lattices, was, I suspect, not very perfect in its arrangements for ventilation; but then neither door nor window shut close, and the free air, redolent of heath and furze, found its way in, and did its purifying offices after an imperfect fashion. The first morning began my new country life—and a very novel life it was. It was Sunday. The house was quiet; and when I crept down into the kitchen, I found my friend the farmer's wife preparing breakfast. On one side of that family room was a large oaken table covered with huge basins, and a mighty loaf; over a turf fire hung an enormous skillet, full to the brim with simmering milk. One by one three or four young men dropped in, jauntily dressed in the cleanest smock-frocks—the son of the house had a smart Sunday coat, with an expansive nosegay of daffodils and wallflowers. They sat quietly down at the oak table, and their portions of milk were distributed to each. Now entered the farmer—of whom I still think with deep respect—a yeoman of simple habits but of large intelligence. He had been in the household of the Governor of Pennsylvania before the War of Independence; and could tell me of a wonderful man named Franklin, whom he had known; and of the Torpedo, on which he had seen Governor Walsh make experiments; and of lightning drawn from the clouds. The farmer, his wife, and the little boy who had come to dwell with them, sat down at a round table nearer the fire. Sunday was a great day in that household. There was the cheerful walk to church; the anticipations of the coming dinner, not loud but earnest; the promise of the afternoon cricket. Returned from church, the kitchen had been somewhat changed in appearance since the morning; the oak table was moved into the centre, and covered with a coarse cloth as white as the May-blossom; the turf fire gave out a fierce heat, almost unbearable by the urchin who sat on a low stool, turning, with no mechanical aid, the spit which rested upon two andirons, or dogs, and supported in his labour by the grateful fragrance of the steaming beef. To that Sunday

dinner—the one dinner of fresh meat for the week—all sat down; and a happy meal it was, with no lack even of dainties: for there was a flowing bowl of cream to make palatable the hard suet pudding, and a large vinegar-bottle with notches in the cork to besprinkle the cabbage, and a Dutch cheese—and if I dream not, a taste from a flask that immersed mysteriously from a corner cupboard. Then came the cricket and trap-ball of Southern England, yawns in the twilight, a glimmering candle, the chapter in the Family Bible, and an early bed.

The morning of Monday was a busier scene. I was roused at six; but the common breakfast was over. The skillet had been boiled at five; the farmer was off to sell a calf; the ploughmen had taken their teams a-field. The kitchen was solitary. I should have thought myself alone in that world, but for a noisy companionship of chickens and ducklings, that came freely in to pick the crumbs off the floor. I wandered into the farm-yard, ankle deep in muck. In a shed I found my hostess, not disdaining to milk her petted cows. Her hand and her eye were everywhere—from the cow-stall to the dairy, from the hen's nest to the fatting-coop. Are there any such wives left amongst us? Bloomfield has described the milking-time, pretty much as I saw it in those primitive days:—

‘Forth comes the Maid, and like the morning smiles;
The Mistress, too, and follow'd close by Giles.
A friendly tripod forms their humble seat,
With pails bright scour'd and delicately sweet.
Where shadowing elms obstruct the morning ray—
Begins their work, begins the simple lay;
The full-charg'd udder yields its willing streams;
While *Mary* sings some lover's amorous dreams;
And crouching *Giles* beneath a neighbouring tree
Tugs o'er his pail, and chants with equal glee;
Whose hat with tatter'd brim, of nap so bare,
From the cow's side purloins a coat of hair,
A mottled ensign of his harmless trade,
An unambitious, peaceable cockade.
As unambitious too that cheerful aid
The Mistress yields beside her rosy Maid;

With joy she views her plenteous reeking store,
And bears a brimmer to the dairy door ;
Her cows dismiss'd, the luscious mead to roam,
Till eve again recall them loaded home.'

After the milking-time was the breakfast for the good wife and for 'Mary.' Twice a week there was churning to be done; and as the butter came more quickly in the warmth of the kitchen the churn was removed there in that chilly spring-time. There was no formal dinner on week-days in that house. The loaf stood upon the table, with a vast piece of bacon, an abundant supply of which rested upon a strong rack below the ceiling. Some of the men had taken their dinner to the distant field; another or so came carelessly in, and cutting a huge slice of the brown bread and the home-cured, pulled out what was called a pocket-knife, and despatched the meal with intense enjoyment. At three, the ploughmen returned home. That was an hour of delight to me, for I was privileged to ride a horse to water in a neighbouring pond. The afternoon, as far as I remember, was one of idleness. In the gloaming (why should we not Anglicise the word?) the young men slid into the kitchen. The farmer sat reading, the wife knitting. There was a corner in the enormous chimney, where I dwelt apart, watching the turf-smoke as it curled up the vast chasm. There was no assumption of dignity in the master when a song was called for. How well do I remember that song of Dibdin—

“I left my poor plough to go ploughing the deep!”

That song told of a war-time, and of naval dangers and glories; and the chorus was roared out as if ‘the inconstant wind’ was a very jolly thing, and ‘the carfindo’ who tempted the ploughman ‘for to go and leave his love behind,’ not at all a bad fellow.

I read ‘The Farmer’s Boy’ after I was familiar with the farmer’s kitchen. It is worth reading now, if it were only for its picture of a past age. Even at that time the Harvest Home was becoming ungenteel:—

' Here once a year Distinction lowers its crest,
 The master, servant, and the merry guest,
 Are equal all; and round the happy ring
 The reaper's eyes exulting glances fling,
 And, warm'd with gratitude, he quits his place,
 With sun-burnt hands and ale-enliven'd face,
 Refills the jug his honour'd host to tend,
 To serve at once the master and the friend;
 Proud thus to meet his smiles, to share his tale,
 His nuts, his conversation, and his ale.

Such were the days—of days long past I sing,
 When Pride gave place to Mirth without a sting;
 Ere tyrant customs strength sufficient bore
 To violate the feelings of the poor;
 To leave them distant in the madd'ning race,
 Where'er Refinement shows its hated face:
 Nor causeless hated;—'tis the peasant's curse,
 That hourly makes his wretched station worse;
 Destroys life's intercourse; the social plan
 That rank to rank cements, as man to man:
 Wealth flows around him, Fashion lordly reigns;
 Yet poverty is his, and mental pains.

* * * * *

Our annual feast, when Earth her plenty yields,
 When crown'd with boughs the last load quits the fields,
 The aspect still of ancient joys puts on;
 The aspect only, with the substance gone:
 The self-same Horn is still at our command,
 But serves none now but the plebeian hand;
 For home-brew'd Ale, neglected and debased,
 Is quite discarded from the realms of taste.
 Where unaffected Freedom charm'd the soul,
 The separate table and the costly bowl,
 Cool as the blast that checks the budding Spring,
 A mockery of gladness round them fling.'

Were I to see that homestead once more, I have no doubt I should find, like the grandsire of Crabbe's poem, that 'all is changed.' The scenes which live in my recollection can never come back; nor is it fitting that they should. With the primitive simplicity there was also a good deal of primitive waste and carelessness. Except in the dairy, dirt and litter were the accompaniments of the rude house-keeping. The fields were imperfectly cultivated; the

headlands were full of weeds; there was one meadow close to the house, called the Pitle (still a Norfolk word), in which I assiduously, but vainly, worked with a little hoe at defying thistles. I have no doubt that 'all is changed,' or the farm would be no longer a farm. The neglect belonged to the times of the dear loaf. The 'refinement' of Bloomfield really means the progress of improvement.



Sir John Dinely.

WINDSOR, AS IT WAS.

My earliest recollections of Windsor are exceedingly delightful. I was born within a stone's throw of the Castle gates; and my whole boyhood was passed in the most unrestrained enjoyment of the venerable and beautiful objects by which I was surrounded, as if they had been my own peculiar and proper inheritance. The king and his family lived in a plain barrack-looking lodge at his castle foot, which, in its external appearance and its interior arrange-

ments, exactly corresponded with the humble taste and the quiet domestic habits of George III. The whole range of the castle, its terrace, and its park, were places dedicated to the especial pleasures of a schoolboy. Neither warder, nor sentinel, nor gamekeeper interfered with our boisterous sports. The deserted courts of the upper quadrangle often re-echoed, on the moonlight winter evenings, with our *whoo-whoop*; and delightful hiding-places indeed there were amongst the deep buttresses and sharp angles of those old towers. The rooks and a few antique dowagers, who had each their domicile in some lone turret of that spacious square, were the only personages who were disturbed by our revelry;—and they, kind creatures, never complained to the authorities.

But if the inner courts of Windsor Castle rang with our sports, how much more noisy was the joy in the magnificent playground of the terrace! Away we went, fearless as the chamois, along the narrow wall; and even the awful height of the north side, where we looked down upon the tops of the highest trees, could not abate the rash courage of *follow my leader*. In the pauses of the sport, how often has my eye reposed upon that magnificent landscape which lay at my feet, drinking in its deep beauty, without a critical thought of the picturesque! Then, indeed, I knew nothing about

‘ The stately brow
Of Windsor’s heights,’—

nor could I bid the stranger

‘ Th’ expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey.’

My thoughts, then, were all fresh and vivid, and I could enjoy the scenes amongst which I lived, without those artificial and hackneyed associations which make up the being of the man. Great, too, was my joy, when laying my eye to the edge of the eastern wall, and looking along a channel cut in the surface, I saw the dome of St. Paul’s looming through the smoke at twenty miles’ distance. Then, God be praised, my ear had not been shattered, nor my

heart hardened, by dwelling under the shadow of that dome:—and I thought of London, as a place for the wise and the good to be great and happy in—and not as an especial den in which

‘All creeping creatures, venomous and low,’

might crawl over and under each other.

The Park! what a glory was that for cricket and kite-flying. No one molested us. The beautiful plain immediately under the eastern terrace was called the Bowling Green;—and, truly, it was as level as the smoothest of those appendages to suburban inns. We took excellent care that the grass should not grow too fast beneath our feet. No one molested us. The king, indeed, would sometimes stand alone for half an hour to see the boys at cricket;—and heartily would he laugh when the wicket of some confident urchin went down at the first ball. But we did not heed his majesty. He was a quiet good-humoured gentleman, in a long blue coat, whose face was as familiar to us as that of our writing-master; and many a time had that gracious gentleman bidden us good morning, when we were hunting for mushrooms in the early dew, and had crossed his path as he was returning from his dairy to his eight-o’clock breakfast. Every one knew that most respectable and amiable of country squires, called His Majesty; and truly there was no inequality in the matter, for his majesty knew every one.

This circumstance was a natural result of the familiar and simple habits of the court. There was as little parade as can well be imagined in all the movements of George III. and his family; and there was infinitely more state at such places as Stowe and Alnwick, than in the royal lodge at Windsor. The good man and his amiable family, perhaps, as a matter of policy, carried this freedom of manners to a little excess;—and it was from this cause that the constant attacks of Peter Pindar, in which the satire is levelled not only against the most amiable of weaknesses, but against positive virtues, were so popular during the French revo-

lutionary war. But, at any rate, the unrestrained intercourse of the king with those by whom he was surrounded, is something which is now very pleasant to look back upon. I have now no recollection of having, when a child, seen the king with any of the appendages of royalty, except when he went to town, once a week, to hold a levee; and then ten dragoons rode before and ten after his carriage, and the tradesmen in the streets through which he passed duly stood at their doors, to make the most profound reverences, as in duty bound, when their monarch looked 'every inch a king.' But the bows were less profound, and the wonderment none at all, when twice a week, as was his wont during the summer months, his majesty with all his family, and a considerable bevy of ancient maids of honour and half-pay generals, walked through the town, or rode at a slow pace in an open carriage, to the Windsor theatre, which was then in the High Street. Reader, it is impossible that you can form an idea of the smallness of that theatre, unless you have by chance lived in a country town, when the assembly-room of the head inn has been fitted up with the aid of brown paper and ochre, for the exhibition of some heroes of the sock and buskin, vulgarly called strollers. At the old Windsor theatre, her majesty's apothecary in the lower boxes might have almost felt her pulse across the pit. My knowledge of the drama commenced at the early age of seven years, amidst this royal fellowship in fun;—and most loyally did I laugh when his majesty, leaning back in his capacious arm-chair in the stage-box, shook the house with his genuine peals of hearty merriment. Well do I remember the whole course of these royal play-goings. The theatre was of an inconvenient form, with very sharp angles at the junctions of the centre with the sides. The stage-box and the whole of the left or O. P. side of the lower tier were appropriated to royalty. The house would fill at about half-past six. At seven precisely, Mr. Thornton, the manager, made his entrance backwards, through a little door, into the stage-box, with a plated candlestick in each hand, bowing with all the grace that his gout would permit.

The six fiddles struck up 'God save the King;' the audience rose; the king nodded round and took his seat next the stage; the queen curtsied, and took her arm-chair also. The satin bills of their majesties and the princesses were then duly displayed, and the dingy green curtain drew up. The performances were invariably either a comedy and farce, or more frequently three farces, with a plentiful interlarding of comic songs. Quick, Suett, and Mrs. Mattocks were the reigning favourites; and, about 1800, Elliston and Fawcett became occasional stars. But Quick and Suett were the king's especial delight. When Lovegold, in 'The Miser,' drawled out 'a pin a day's a groat a year,' the laugh of the royal circle was somewhat loud; but when Dicky Gossip exhibited in his vocation, and accompanied the burden of his song 'Dicky Gossip, Dicky Gossip is the man,' with the blasts of his powder-puff, the cachinnation was loud and long, and the gods prolonged the chorus of laughter till the echo died away in the royal box. At the end of the third act, coffee was handed round to the court circle; and precisely at eleven the performances finished,—and the flambeaux gleamed through the dimly-lighted streets of Windsor, as the happy family returned to their tranquil home.

There was occasionally a good deal of merriment going forward at Windsor in these old days. I have a dim recollection of having danced in the little garden which was once the moat of the Round Tower, and which Washington Irving has been pleased to imagine 'existed in the time of James I. of Scotland.' I have a perfect remembrance of a fête at Frogmore, about the beginning of the present century, where there was a Dutch fair,—and haymaking very agreeably performed in white kid gloves by the belles of the town,—and the buck-basket scene of 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' represented by Fawcett and Mrs. Mattocks, and I think Mrs. Gibbs, under the colonnade of the house in the open day—and variegated lamps—and transparencies—and tea served out in tents, with a magnificent scramble for the bread and butter.

There was great good humour and freedom on all these occasions ;—and if the grass was damp and the young ladies caught cold, and the sandwiches were scarce and the gentlemen went home hungry—I am sure these little drawbacks were not to be imputed to the royal entertainers, who delighted to see their neighbours and dependants happy and joyous.

A few years passed over my head, and the scene was somewhat changed. The king and his family migrated from their little lodge into the old and spacious castle. This was about 1804. The lath and plaster of Sir William Chambers was abandoned to the equerries and chance visitors of the court ; and the low rooms and dark passages that had scarcely been tenanted since the days of Anne, were made tolerably habitable by the aid of diligent upholstery. Upon the whole, the change was not one which conduced to comfort : and I have heard that the princesses wept when they quitted their snug boudoirs in the Queen's Lodge. Windsor Castle, as it was, was a sad patchwork affair. Elizabeth took great pains to make it a royal residence, according to the notions of her time ; but there were many difficulties in converting the old fortress into a fit scene for the gallantries of Leicester and Essex. I have seen, in the State Paper Office, a Report of the Surveyors of the Castle to Lord Burleigh, upon the subject of certain necessary reparations and additions, wherein, amongst divers curious matters illustrative of the manners of that age, it was mentioned that the partition separating the common passage from the sleeping-room of the queen's maids of honour needed to be raised, inasmuch as the pages looked over the said partition before the honourable damsels had arisen, to the great scandal of her majesty's most spotless court, &c. Charles II. caused Verrio to paint his crimson and azure gods and goddesses upon the ceilings in the state-rooms of Windsor ; and he converted the old Gothic windows into hideous ones of the fashion of Versailles. Anne lived a good deal at the castle, but comfort was little understood even in her day ; and from

her time, till that of George IV., Windsor was neglected. The castle, as it was previous to the recent complete remodelling, was frightfully incommodious. The passages were dark, the rooms were small and cold, the ceilings were low, and as one high window gave light to two floors, the conversation of the lower rooms was distinctly heard in the upper. George III. took a fancy to occupy the castle himself, from finding James Wyatt the solitary inhabitant of some magnificent apartments on the north side. The architect gave up his spacious studio; the work of reparation began; and the king, in his declining years, took possession of a palace full of splendid associations with the ancient records of his country, but in itself a sufficiently dreary and uncomfortable abode. He passed very few years of happiness here; and it subsequently became to him a prison under the most painful circumstances which can ever attend the loss of liberty.

The king and his family had lived at Windsor nearly thirty years, before it occurred to him to inhabit his own castle. The period at which he took possession was one of extraordinary excitement. It was the period of the threatened invasion of England by Napoleon, when, as was the case with France upon the manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, 'the land bristled.' The personal character of the king did a great deal towards giving the turn to public opinion. His unconquerable perseverance, which some properly enough called obstinacy—his simple habits, so flattering to the John Bullism of the day—his straightforward and earnest piety—and the ease with which he appeared to put off the farmer, and put on the soldier,—each and all of these qualities were exceedingly in accordance with the temper of the times. The doings at Windsor were certainly more than commonly interesting at that period; and I was just of an age to understand something of their meaning, and partake the excitement. Sunday was especially a glorious day; and the description of one Sunday will furnish an adequate picture of those of two or three years.

At nine o'clock the sound of martial music was heard in the streets. The Blues and the Stafford Militia then did duty at Windsor; and though the one had seen no service since Minden, and most undeservedly bore the stigma of a past generation, and the other was composed of men who had never faced any danger but the ignition of a coal-pit, they were each a remarkably fine body of soldiers, and the king did well to countenance them. Of the former regiment George III. had a troop of his own, and he delighted to wear the regimentals of a captain of the Blues; and well did his burly form become the cocked hat and heavy jack-boots which were the fashion of that fine corps in 1805. At nine o'clock, as I have said, of a Sunday morning, the noise of trumpet and of drum was heard in the streets of Windsor; for the regiments paraded in the castle quadrangle. The troops occupied the whole square. At about ten the king appeared with his family. He passed round the lines while the salute was performed; and many a rapid word of inquiry had he to offer to the colonels who accompanied him. Not always did he wait for an answer—but that was after the fashion of royalty in general. He passed onwards towards St. George's Chapel. But the military pomp did not end in what is called the upper quadrangle. In the lower ward, at a very humble distance from the regular troops, were drawn up a splendid body of men, ycleped the Windsor Volunteers; and most gracious were the nods of royalty to the well-known drapers, and hatters, and booksellers, who had the honour to hold commissions in that distinguished regiment. The salutations, however, were short, and onwards went the cortège, for the chapel bell was tolling in, and the king was always punctual.

I account it one of the greatest blessings of my life, and a circumstance which gave a tone to my imagination which I would not resign for many earthly gifts, that I lived in a place where the cathedral service was duly and beautifully performed. Many a frosty winter evening have I sat in the cold choir of St. George's Chapel, with no congregation but

two or three gaping strangers, and an ancient female or so in the stalls, lifted up to heaven by the peals of the sweetest of organs, or entranced by the divine melody of the *Nunc Dimittis*, or of some solemn anthem of Handel or Boyce, breathed most exquisitely from the lips of Vaughan. If the object of devotion be to make us feel, and to carry away the soul from all low and earthly thoughts, assuredly the grand chants of our cathedral service are not without their use. I admire—none can admire more—the abstract idea of an assembly of reasoning beings, offering up to the Author of all good their thanksgivings and their petitions in a pure and intelligible form of words; but the question will always intrude, does the heart go along with this lip-service?—and is the mind sufficiently excited by this reasonable worship to forget its accustomed association with the business, and vanities, and passions of the world? The cathedral service *does* affect the imagination, and through that channel reaches the heart; and thus I can forgive the solemnities of Catholicism, (of which our cathedral service is a relic,) which act upon the mind precisely in the same way. The truth is, we Church of England people have made religion a cold thing by entirely appealing to the understanding; and then Calvinism comes in to supply the place of high mass, by offering an excitement of an entirely different character.—But where am I wandering?

St. George's Chapel is assuredly the most beautiful gem of the later Gothic architecture. It does not impress the mind by its vastness, or grandeur of proportions, as York—or by its remote antiquity, as parts of Ely; but by its perfect and symmetrical beauty. The exquisite form of the roof—elegant yet perfectly simple, as every rib of each column which supports it spreads out upon the ceiling into the most gorgeous fan—the painted windows—the rich carving of the stalls of the choir—the waving banners—and, in accordance with the whole character of the place, its complete preservation and scrupulous neatness—all these, and many more characteristics which I cannot describe, render it a gem of the architecture of the fifteenth century.

As a boy I thought the Order of the Garter was a glorious thing: and believed,—as what boy has not believed?—that

‘The goodly golden chain of chivalry,’

as Spenser has it, was let down from heaven to earth. I did not then know that even Edward the Black Prince was a ferocious and cruel spoiler of other men’s lands, and that all his boasted meekness and magnanimity was a portion of the make-believe of those ages when *the people* were equally trampled upon by the victor and the vanquished. When, too, in the daily service of St. George’s Chapel I heard the words, ‘God bless our gracious sovereign, and all the knights companions of the most honourable and noble Order of the Garter,’—though I thought it was a little impious to parade the mere titles of miserable humanity before the footstool of the Most High, I still considered that the honourable and noble persons, so especially prayed for, were the choicest portion of humanity—the very ‘salt of the earth,’—and that heaven would forgive this pride of its creatures. I saw the Installation of 1805; and I hated these words ever after. The old King marched erect; and the Prince of Wales bore himself proudly (he did not look so magnificent as Kemble in *Coriolanus*); but my Lord of Salisbury, and my Lord of Chesterfield, and my Lord of Winchilsea, and half-a-dozen other lords—what a frightful spectacle of fat, limping, leaden supporters of chivalry did they exhibit to my astonished eyes! The vision of ‘throngs of knights and barons bold’ fled for ever; and I never heard the words again without a shudder.

But I am forgetting my old Sunday at Windsor. Great was the crowd to see the king and his family return from chapel; for by this time London had poured forth its chaises and one, and the astonished inmates of Cheapside and St. Mary Axe were elbowing each other to see how a monarch smiled. They saw him well, and often have I heard the disappointed exclamation, ‘Is *that* the King?’ They saw a portly man, in a plain suit of regimentals, and

no crown upon his head. What a fearful falling-off from the king of the story-books!

The terrace, however, was the great Sunday attraction;—and though Bishop Porteus remonstrated with his Majesty for suffering people to crowd together, and bands to play on these occasions, I cannot think that the good-tempered monarch committed any mortal sin in walking amongst his people in their holiday attire. This terrace was a motley scene. The barber from Eton and his seven daughters elbowed the judge, who rented his back parlour when he was in the sixth form. The dowager who presented her niece at the last Drawing-room struggled for the front rank with the rosy landlady of the Red Lion at Brentford. The prime minister waited quietly amidst the crush till the royal party should descend from their dining-room,—smiling at, if not unheeding, the anxious inquiries of the stockbroker from Change Alley, who wondered if Mr. Pitt would carry a gold stick before the King. The only time I saw that minister was under these circumstances. It was the year before he died. He stood firmly and proudly amongst the crowd for some half-hour till the King should arrive. The monarch, of course, immediately recognised him: the contrast in the demeanour of the two personages made a remarkable impression upon me—and that of the minister first showed me an example of the perfect self-possession of men of great abilities.

After a year or two of this sort of excitement the King became blind;—and painful was the exhibition of the led-horse of the good old man, as he took his accustomed ride. In a few more years a still heavier calamity fell upon him—and from that time Windsor Castle became, comparatively, a mournful place. The terrace was shut up;—the ancient pathway through the park, and under the castle walls, was diverted;—and a somewhat Asiatic state and stillness seemed to usurp the reign of the old free and familiar intercourse of the sovereign with the people.

I was proud of Windsor; and my great delight was to

show the lions to strangers. There were always two staple commodities of this nature—the Round Tower and the State Apartments of the castle, which were not affected by any of the changes of the times. The Round Tower has an historical interest of a certain kind about it, from having been the prison of the captive Kings of France and Scotland in the reign of Edward III. As we grow older this sort of charm becomes very worthless;—for, after all, there is just as much philosophical interest in the wars of the Fantees and the Ashantees, as in those of the French and the English for the disputed possession to a crown, the owner or pretender to which never dreamt that the possession or the winning imposed the least obligation to provide for the good of the people from whom they claimed allegiance. However, I used to feel this sort of interest in the place;—and when they showed me the armour of John of France and David of Scotland (as genuine, I dare say, as any of those which Dr. Meyrick has consigned to plebeian shoulders, and much later eras), I felt very proud of my country for having so gloriously carried fire and sword to the dwellings of peaceful and inoffensive lieges. The Round Tower was a miserably furnished, dreary sort of place, and only repaid a visit by the splendid view from its top. But it once had a charm which, like many other charms of our boyhood, has perished for ever. There was a young lady, a dweller within ‘the proud Keep,’ to whom was intrusted the daily task of expounding to inquiring visitants the few wonders of the place. Amongst the choicest of them was some dingy tapestry, which for aught I know still adorns the walls, on which were delineated various passages of the piteous story of Hero and Leander. The fair guide thus discoursed thereon, with the volubility of an Abbé Barthélemy, though with a somewhat different measure of knowledge:—‘Here, ladies and gentlemen, is the whole lamentable history of Hero and Leander. Hero was a nun. She lived in that old ancient nunnery which you see. There you see the lady abbess chiding Hero for her love for Leander. And now, ladies and

gentlemen, look at Leander swimming across St. George's Channel, while Hero, from the nunnery window, holds out a large flambeau. There you see the affectionate meeting of the two lovers—and then the cruel parting. Ladies and gentlemen, Leander perished as he was swimming back. His body was picked up by Captain Vanslom, of his Majesty's ship *Britannia*, and carried into Gibraltar, where it was decently buried. And this, ladies and gentlemen, is the true history of Hero and Leander, which you see on that tapestry.'—Alas! for the march of intellect; such guides are every day getting more and more scarce; and we shall have nothing for our pains in the propagation of knowledge, but to yawn over sober sense for the rest of our lives.

. The pictures in the State Rooms at Windsor were always worth seeing; but the number exhibited had diminished from year to year. I remember the Cartoons there; and also remember that I did not know what to make of them. The large men in the little boat, in the *Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, were somewhat startling; but then again, the Paul preaching at Athens, and the Ananias, filled me full of awe and wonder. I have a remembrance of a Murillo (a Boy and Puppies), which used to hang at the end of Queen Elizabeth's Gallery; and I was amazingly taken with those two ancient pictures, the *Battle of Spurs* (I think) and the *Field of the Cloth of Gold*, which afterwards went to the Society of Antiquaries, and are now gone to Hampton Court. I never could thoroughly admire King Charles's Beauties.—I dare say they were excellent likenesses; for amongst them all, from Lady Denham to the Duchess of Cleveland, there was a bold meretricious air—anything but the retiring loveliness which always finds a place in the dreams of youth. The *Misers* is a favourite picture with everybody, for its truth of delineation and force of character; and yet there is no great skill of the artist in this celebrated work of the Blacksmith of Antwerp. It certainly looks very like what it is represented to be—the work of a self-taught

genius, labouring with irrepressible enthusiasm for a great object. I wonder if he painted as well after he married the maiden, whose hand he is said to have won by this proof of his dedication to love as well as to art.

St. George's Hall, about which so much has been talked, was sadly out of character with its chivalrous associations. Verrio, with the wretched taste of his age, had painted a Roman triumph on the walls, in which the principal personages were Edward the Black Prince and his royal prisoner of France; and with the same spirit of absurdity, and with a more hateful spirit of gross flattery, he had scrawled the ceilings of the whole palace with gods and goddesses, welcoming Charles II. to their banquets. In one respect he was right; for this most mean and heartless profligate was a fit companion for the scoundrels of the Mythology—for the tyrant and the sensualist, the betrayer and the pander, whether called by the names of Jupiter or Bacchus, of Mercury or Mars. And yet this Verrio (insolent puppy!) had written up in this banqueting-room, set apart for high and solemn festivals—

‘Antonius Verrio, Neapolitanus,
Non ignobili stirpe natus,
Molem hanc Felicissima Manu decoravit.’*

The double conceit of the Italian,—his pride of birth, and his pride of skill in his art—was altogether too ludicrous.

Next to St. George's Hall there was a Guard Chamber, with matchlocks and bandoleers, and such-like curiosities, and a rapid sketch of the Battle of Nordlingen, painted for a triumphal arch by Rubens, worth all the works of Verrio, plastered as they are with real ultramarine. They say it was painted in four-and-twenty hours. Certainly genius can do great things. The last time I saw this Guard Chamber was on a solemn occasion; but I shall never forget the scene which it presented. In costume, in arrange-

* ‘Antonio Verrio, a Neapolitan, born of a not ignoble race, adorned this building with a most happy hand.’

ment, in every particular, it carried the imagination back three centuries. That occasion was when George III. closed his long years of suffering, and lay in state previous to interment. This chamber was tenanted by the yeomen of the guard. The room was darkened—there was no light but that of the flickering wood fire which burnt on an ancient hearth, with dogs, as they are called, on each side of the room; on the ground lay the beds on which the yeomen had slept during the night: they stood in their ancient dresses of state, with broad scarves of crape across their breasts, and crape on their halberds; and as the red light of the burning brands gleamed on their rough faces, and glanced ever and anon amongst the lances, and coats of mail, and tattered banners that hung around the room, all the reality connected with their presence in that place vanished from my view, and I felt as if about to be ushered into the stern presence of the last Harry—and my head was uneasy. In a few moments I was in the chamber of death, and all the rest was black velvet and wax lights.

CRABBE'S MODERN ANTIQUES.

IT is seventy years ago since George Crabbe published his poem of 'The Village.' His age was twenty-nine. He was then in orders, and was domestic chaplain to the Duke of Rutland. But what a life the young man had passed through, before he had attained that social position!—Born in what was then a wretched fishing hamlet, Aldborough—roughly brought up—imperfectly educated—apprenticed to a surgeon, without means to complete his professional studies—lingering hopelessly about his native place,—he at last resolved to cast himself upon the wide ocean of London, and tempt the fearful dangers that belonged to the career of a literary adventurer. Here he struggled and starved for a year. During the first three months of his London life he sent manuscript poems to the booksellers, Dodsley and Becket, which they civilly declined. He addressed verses to Lord Chancellor Thurlow, who informed him that his avocations did not leave him leisure to read verses. He sold his clothes and his books, and pawned his watch and his surgical instruments. His one coat was torn, and he mended it himself. He was reduced at last to eightpence, but the brave man never despaired. He had a strong sense of religion, and he was deeply attached to one who became his wife after thirteen years of untiring constancy. His faith and his love held him up, and kept him out of degradation. At last he wrote a letter to Edmund Burke. It contained this passage: 'In April last I came to London, with three pounds, and flattered myself this would be sufficient to supply me with the common necessities of life till my abilities should procure me more; of these I had the highest opinion, and a poetical vanity contributed to my delusion.' Burke saved Crabbe from the fate of many a one who perished in those

days, when patronage was dying out; and the various resources for the literary labourer that belong to the extension of reading had scarcely begun to exist. Burke persuaded Dodsley to publish 'The Library;' and the Bishop of Norwich to ordain its author, without a degree. His lot in life was fixed. Thurlow invited him to dinner, and telling him he was 'as like Parson Adams as twelve to a dozen,' gave him two small livings. He published 'The Village' in 1783, and 'The Newspaper' in 1785. From that time to 1807, the world had forgotten that a real poet, of very original talents, had appeared, for a short season, and was no more heard of. When Crabbe was fifty-three years of age, he again published a poem. This was 'The Parish Register.' 'The Borough' speedily followed. His 'Tales' were in the same vein. Their success was triumphant. The author, whose worldly means were reduced to eightpence in 1780, sold the copyright of his poems, in 1817, to Mr. Murray for three thousand pounds.

During these twenty-five years, when Crabbe was living in the seclusion of unpretending duty, he was gathering materials for works which are among the most valuable pictures of English life, as it existed in a generation that is recently past. It is the object of this paper to trace some of those representations of *Classes* that may now be termed obsolete. Old Aubrey says of Shakspere—'His comedies will remain wit as long as the English language is understood, for that he handles *mores hominum*.' It is the same with Crabbe. He rarely deals with those individual peculiarities which the early writers used to term 'humours.' His satire and his pathos are essentially generic. He paints individual characters, and their costume is peculiar; but it is not the mere caprice of the sitter that has settled the costume. It tells of past manners and modes of thought. It is historical. Sir Roger de Coverley is an individualised portrait;—so Parson Adams;—so my Uncle Toby;—but they are each great general representatives of human nature in their particular age and position. Thus, Crabbe did not wear a cassock, or choose a footman for his travelling com-

panion; but in his simplicity and knowledge, Thurlow saw his resemblance to Parson Adams. Inferior masters paint coxcombities that have no relation to universal modes of thought or action. Shepherds say, that out of a thousand sheep no one face is like another; but then, no one face is so peculiar that it is unlike the face of a sheep. Nature, in her individualization, cleaves to the general. So does all high art.

'The Village' of Crabbe is really his native 'Borough' of Aldborough, in Suffolk. It was such a 'Borough' as England tolerated within the last quarter of a century. Its population, seventy years ago, has been described in lines which forcibly contrast with the Arcadian pictures in Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village.'

'Where are the swains, who, daily labour done,
With rural games play'd down the setting sun;
Who struck with matchless force the bounding ball,
Or made the ponderous quoit obliquely fall;
While some huge Ajax, terrible and strong,
Engag'd some artful stripling of the throng,
And fell beneath him, foil'd, while far around
Hoarse triumph rose, and rocks return'd the sound?
Where now are these?—Beneath yon cliff they stand,
To show the freighted pinnacle where to land;
To load the ready steed with guilty haste,
To fly in terror o'er the pathless waste,
Or, when detected, in their straggling course,
To foil their foes by cunning or by force;
Or, yielding part (which equal knaves demand),
To gain a lawless passport through the land.'

Amongst such scenes lived the young Poet;—amongst

'a bold, artful, surly, savage race;
Who, only skill'd to take the finny tribe,
The yearly dinner, or septennial bribe,'

watched the tossed vessel from the shore, rejoicing in the prospect of a wreck. Smuggler, wrecker, venal elector—all are gone from Aldborough. The 'Borough' is disfranchised; wise revenue laws have put an end to the smuggler's

vocation. With the smuggler vanished the pedlar who carried about contraband goods:—

‘Dawkins, a dealer once, on burthen’d back
Bore his whole substance in a pedlar’s pack;
To dames discreet, the duties yet unpaid,
His stores of lace and hyson he convey’d.’

They are gone. Will the time never arrive when wise laws shall consign the poacher to the same oblivion?

Crabbe has described the sorrows of the poor, in verses which may have done something to lead us to mitigate the labourer’s lot, by benefits more enduring than what is mis-called Charity. He has described, too, the Poor-house, such as it existed in those days:—

‘Theirs is yon House that holds the parish poor,
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door;
There, where the putrid vapours, flagging, play,
And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day,—
There, children dwell who know no parents’ care.’

That wretched parish workhouse is gone. No walls of mud—no broken door—no naked rafters—no patched panes—no pestilent vapours in badly-ventilated rooms. The parentless children are taught far better than many who *do* know the parents’ care. Society is doing its duty to stop the growth of pauperism, and to succour real destitution. There are two obsolete portraits connected with the Poor, which we may happily contrast with the same official persons in our own times.

And first, the Parish Apothecary, who struts into the wretched bedroom of the old Workhouse, where

‘The drooping wretch reclines his languid head.’

The Apothecary comes:—

‘But soon a loud and hasty summons calls,
Shakes the thin roof, and echoes round the walls;
Anon, a figure enters, quaintly neat,
All pride and business, bustle and conceit;
With looks unalter’d by these scenes of woe,
With speed that, entering, speaks his haste to go,

He bids the gazing throng around him fly,
 And carries fate and physic in his eye:
 A potent quack, long versed in human ills,
 Who first insults the victim whom he kills;
 Whose murd'rous hand a drowsy Bench protect,
 And whose most tender mercy is neglect.

Paid by the parish for attendance here,
 He wears contempt upon his sapient sneer;
 In haste he seeks the bed where misery lies,
 Impatience mark'd in his averted eyes;
 And, some habitual queries hurried o'er,
 Without reply, he rushes on the door;
 His drooping patient, long inured to pain,
 And long unheeded, knows remonstrance vain;
 He ceases now the feeble help to crave
 Of man; and silent sinks into the grave.'

Jeffrey, writing in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1807, says:
 'The consequential apothecary, who gives an impatient
 attendance in these homes of misery, is admirably de-
 scribed.' If Jeffrey had reviewed Crabbe thirty years later,
 he must have said that such a character was a creature of
 pure imagination. Let any person who knows of the
 labours of the medical officer of a Poor Law Union say if
 there be one now in the charge of an English parish,

'Who first insults the victim whom he kills;'

who is protected by 'a drowsy Bench;'

'And whose most tender mercy is neglect.'

In these our days, happier in many respects, the medical
 officer, overworked as too many official and non-official
 people are, can rarely be accused of want of zeal. He rides
 from cottage to cottage; he is ready at all hours by day or
 by night; a thousand eyes are upon him. People of all
 ranks know that neglect of the poor is visited upon the
 rich. But his discharge of his duty is the result of what
 has become an *esprit de corps*. He has deep responsibilities
 which 'bustle and conceit' will not shuffle off. He must
 know, and he must act. His ministry is one of benevolence;
 and he must work it out, even in the face of his own danger

and suffering. If fever strike down the poor man, 'the doctor,' as the poor man calls him, must be at his side. There is no 'drowsy Bench' to tell him to stay away; for more vigilant administrators know that if the sick man die there are orphans to be provided for. The whole tone of society has changed in its estimate of the Poor and the duties which we owe to them. No wonder that Crabbe's Parish Apothecary is as obsolete as the Physician's muff of a century ago.

I approach, with equal confidence, the obsolete portrait of the Parish Priest—he who is summoned to the pauper's bed to impart the last consolations:—

'But ere his death some pious doubts arise,
Some simple fears, which "bold bad men" despise;
Fain would he ask the parish priest to prove
His title certain to the joys above:
For this he sends the murmuring nurse, who calls
The holy stranger to these dismal walls:
And doth not he, the pious man appear,
He, "passing rich with forty pounds a year?"
Ah! no: a shepherd of a different stock,
And far unlike him, feeds this little flock:
A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday's task
As much as God or man can fairly ask;
The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
To fields the morning, and to feasts the night;
None better skill'd the noisy pack to guide,
To urge their chase, to cheer them or to chide;
A sportsman keen, he shoots through half the day,
And, skill'd at whist, devotes the night to play:
Then while such honours bloom around his head,
Shall he sit sadly by the sick man's bed,
To raise the hope he feels not, or with zeal
To combat fears that e'en the pious feel?'

That Priest has followed the Parish Apothecary to oblivion. But I have seen the man, even in my time. I have seen an honourable and reverend gentleman pacing down the main street of a country town, with gun in hand, and mob at heel, to a pigeon-match. Are there such ministers left? I believe not. They are with the Parson Trullibers of a century ago. Simple indifference, to say

nothing of more unseemly attributes of the clerical character, has passed away. The clergyman's office, by a happy appropriation of a true English word, is called his 'duty.' The modern clergyman knows that 'to do duty' is to do something more than preach once a week—that he is called to be the friend and the civilizer wherever he is placed. The meaning of the word 'duty' was very much forgotten, by more classes than the clerical, when a sentence went forth that, Heaven be praised, need not be sculptured upon pedestals of brass—'England expects every man to do his duty.' These memorable words have sunk into the national heart.

But there is another official character, whose business is with Parishes and Poor; and he is also fast becoming obsolete. Crabbe has well described him:—

'There is a doubtful Pauper, and we think
'Tis not with us to give him meat and drink :
There is a Child ; and 'tis not mighty clear
Whether his mother lived with us a year :
A road's indicted, and our seniors doubt
If in our proper boundary or without :
But what says our Attorney ? He, our friend,
Tells us 'tis just and manly to contend.
"What ! to a neighbouring parish yield your cause,
While you have money, and the nation laws ?
What ! lose without a trial, that which, tried,
May—nay, it must—be given on our side ?
All men of spirit would contend ; such men
Than lose a pound would rather hazard ten.
What ! be imposed on ? No ! a British soul
Despises imposition, hates control."'

How truly has the Poet recorded the wordy debates, and high resolves, that followed in the wake of the 'doubtful pauper !' How Churchwarden, Overseer, Justice, Constable, and Attorney, revelled in the prospect of a Settlement Appeal ! What post-chaises of witnesses they carried to the Sessions ! How they stopped at the Half-way House, for a preliminary dinner, to prepare them for the coming fatigues ! How they spent the evening before the

trial-day in going over all the points with the Attorney's Clerk! How the most learned of the Overseers quoted Burn's Justice, whilst the impatient Clerk, held by the button, assented and sneered. How they lingered about in the county town, nothing loth, for three days of enthusiasm and feasting! How the awful moment at last came on! How the witnesses were catechised in the entrance of the County Hall! How they blundered and broke down; or swore bravely that the ten-pound-a-year tenement was a fictitious rental, or that the apprentice ran away in the last week of his servitude. It was a glorious scene, whoever conquered. One of the set of combatants went home with blue ribbons in their hats; and the rival attorneys took a secret bottle together, before they parted, to settle how the costs should be managed. And these good old times are gone too; and the Parish Attorney is for the most part as obsolete as the law which branded the pauper in the shoulder with R. or V.

Where is the ancient Mayor gone—he of the close Corporation of the little Borough?

‘Him in our Body-Corporate we chose,
And once among us, he above us rose;
Stepping from post to post, he reach'd the Chair,
And there he now reposes—that's the Mayor.’

Where shall I find the Olympian Jupiter of my own young days? He is gone for ever. The only possible relic of the race is a London Alderman—who is also travelling to the limbo of all ignorance and corruption. Let me solace my memory with the shadow of *my* Corporator. He was a retired shopkeeper, who, finding the struggle to ascend into the atmosphere of gentility perfectly hopeless, sat himself quietly down to lord it over his former equals for the rest of his life. As he took his morning walk to the Coffee-room—(that was our only Literary and Scientific Institution), I could recognise him at a street's length by the dignity of his gait. His greeting of an old brother of the scales was suited to the publicity of the place in which

they met; but with the Rector or the Captain he was ever familiar. Yet he did not spend his time in greetings in the market-places. He was a busy man. He was on his legs at every Vestry; it was essential that every one should know *his* opinion. He supported the powers that be, from the Lord Chancellor to the watchman. He never moved without a precedent. Any one who doubted him was a Radical—that was the word of opprobrium in those days). When he saw a chance of serious discussion he rose to ‘Order.’ If the malcontents persisted in thinking the public business involved some necessity for discussion, he appealed to the meeting to support the Chair—and thus the Ayes had it. Nevertheless he was an Orator. I have heard him at a public dinner, when the Corporation was toasted, rise and say:—

‘Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, for myself and my worthy colleagues I beg leave to thank you for the honour you have done us in drinking our healths, and beg leave, in return, to drink all your good healths.’ It produced a wonderful impression.

At an Election his genius luxuriated. He was seen arm-in-arm with the ministerial Candidate on his canvass, and sat on his right hand at dinner. On the day of Election he always seconded the nomination of the ‘The Honourable Richard Overdo, commonly called Lord Overdo.’ Though an orator and a literary man—for he delighted to call upon the printer of the provincial newspaper to tell him that he had put an *e* for a *c*, or a *q* for a *p*—he hated the spread of intelligence. He hated National Schools—but he patronised the old Free Schools, which distributed the arts of reading and writing like prizes in the lottery. I knew him not in the secret councils of the Body Corporate; but I knew that in or out of office he was the great wheel of the machine. He and any two were a majority. His sole policy was to keep that illustrious Body, and the inhabitants of his Borough, perfectly distinct. He delighted that the Body should have the start of the Town in an address to Royalty. He held that the Body was bound to

give no account of its proceedings. To do him justice, he tolerated no private misappropriation of the Corporate funds. They were for the solace and dignity of the Body. It was an uncorrupt Corporation; but it never did anything for the *Public* good.

And he, too, is gone—in the Provinces.

Of the same family as the ancient Corporator was the obsolete Justice of the Peace:—

‘In contest mighty, and of conquest proud,
Was Justice Bolt, impetuous, warm, and loud;
His fame, his prowess, all the country knew,
And disputants, with one so fierce, were few.’

The Justice was greatest in his Monthly Club. The Head Inn where the Club was held is described by Crabbe; its ample yards, its ready chaise, and smart driver. Who of my times does not recollect the lordly host, who looked after the travelling arrangements with his ‘first turn-out,’ and his pompous bow as you drove from the door? Who can forget the lady-hostess, who welcomed the Justice to the Club with ‘your honour,’ and left Mr. Smith, who walked in with a carpet-bag, to find his own way to a chair and a fire? The landlord is gone, and eke the landlady. Railroads have ruined the Head Inn. If you enter it now you find it dilapidated. There is half a fowl and a ham-bone in the larder. You shudder when you order dinner, and are told you can have ‘*anything*.’ You wait an hour for a chop, in a room fifty feet long, with a large cracked chimney glass and a dingy chandelier. The carpet is faded; the curtains are musty; the tables are rickety. You ask for Port, and you cannot drink it. You ask for your bill, and you are puzzled by its items and its total. In its old days the Justice was proud of the Head Inn,—

‘Where rector, doctor, and attorney pause,
First on each parish, then each public cause;
Indicted roads, and rates that still increase,
The murmuring poor, who will not fast in peace;
Election zeal, and friendship since declined,—
A tax commuted, or a tithe in kind.’

The Justice never missed the Club. He was perpetual Chairman of the Club. How he would talk at the Club!

‘In private business his commands prevail;
On public themes his reasoning turns the scale:
Assenting Silence soothes his happy ear,
And, in or out, his party triumphs here.’

His great party, in or out, was the anti-educational party. A younger man would sometimes argue with him; but he was soon discomfited. Such dialogue is stereotyped, as it were, in my memory; for the time is not very distant when its echo was common enough in the land:—

The wise man talked of that arch-deist, Joseph Lancaster, who set up his schools in the days of George III. He asked where our servants were to come from, if all learnt to read? He held that all the reading in the world would not beat out the gin-shop. These opinions were not peculiar to the Justice forty years ago. But the schools went on; and when the people could read they wanted books; and a few Mechanics' Institutes were established. Then waxed our friend more and more wroth at the Club. ‘I think there is a general improvement of manners produced by education,’ says a timid rebel; ‘you scarcely ever hear an ill word from a mechanic in the streets.’ ‘No,’ says Justice Bolt, ‘they are too cunning for that; they have learnt to be sly; they don’t give you a good round volley of oaths, like their honest fathers; they can blaspheme enough when they get by themselves in their pot-houses, with their cards, and their dice, and their flash songs. I know all about that. Do you think I never heard of the Dog and Duck, and the Bull in the Pound, and the Blue Cat?’ The educator has one more word:— ‘They go now to Literary and Scientific Institutions.’ ‘Oh! Literary and Scientific Institutions! literature and science for a working man! Sir, if you come to that I have done. Improve their taste did you say? what have the house-painter, and the mason, and the carpenter, and the weaver to do with taste? Do their work better, will

they? They won't work at all, sir. I should have been ruined, sir, if I had known anything about taste. Hold your tongue. I did hope we might have been able to save ourselves, in spite of reading and writing. But literature, and science, and taste! Come, sir, you stop the bottle.'

Thus talked the Justice. But his tongue is silent now. The enemies of education have passed away. Higher principles, better examples, than belonged to thirty or even twenty years ago, have grown up amongst us. The anti-educators are gone out with the horn-books. I am told that Messrs. Longman, the eminent publishers, have succeeded in obtaining a Horn-Book, which they preserve as a relic of English literature. How truly did that little instrument, which consisted of the alphabet pasted upon a board, and curiously preserved by a semi-transparent horn, represent the state of knowledge; when even the A, B, C, was mistily exhibited, and covered over as a rare thing. There were gingerbread alphabets, too, in those days; and they were devoured as the good child's rewards. The horn-books and the gingerbread alphabets were for the few. If all the children under instruction learnt now in horn-books, where should we find cattle enough to produce the horn? In the old time the supply was proportioned to the demand.

The objectors to the education of the Poor were answered even in their own days; and Schools went on and prospered. But the school education for all did not fit all, or any, for the understanding of the most simple fundamental principles upon which their own happiness essentially depended. The poor were not taught to go alone. Are they yet adequately taught? The manufacturing classes spend a few millions every two or three years in fruitless strikes. Where have they been taught to understand the true relation between Profits and Wages? Capitalists, no doubt, are as ignorant of many great economical truths as Labourers are. When will they both learn that their interests can never be separated?

But if the Education of the Poor was scant and wretched

in the past days, what was the Education of the Rich? The flogging schoolmaster was becoming a disgrace even in Crabbe's time:—

‘He was, it seem’d, a tyrant of the sort
Who make the cries of tortured boys his sport;
One of a race, if not extinguish’d, tam’d,
The flogger now is of the act asham’d;
But this great mind all mercy’s calls withstood,
This Holofernes was a man of blood.

“Students,” he said, “like horses on the road,
Must well be lash’d before they take the load;
They may be willing for a time to run,
But you must whip them ere the work be done.”’

Yet the schoolmaster clung, unabashed, to his system, especially in our great public schools. Flogging was like the capital punishments of the State. It was cherished as an instrument of governing with the greatest amount of ease to those having the responsibilities of government. It stood in the place of watchfulness and affection. There were no proportions observed in the application of this paltry and inefficient discipline. Dullness and wickedness, theoretically, came under the same stripes; but, practically, dullness made a bad copy of verses, and was infallibly punished, while wickedness committed every excess that could disgrace the uneducated, and escaped untouched, because undiscovered. What did a boy of average intellect learn at a Public School five-and-twenty-years ago, besides an imperfect acquaintance with the words and phrases of antiquity, with little appreciation of its literature? It is nothing for Eton to point to its Wellesley and its Canning, and Harrow to its Peel and its Byron. Great intellects will always assert themselves, in spite of the circumstances which surround them. The question here, as in all other questions of education, is, what is the average amount of enlightenment in a school, as in a nation? If a system existed under which the greater number of boys might, without disgrace, possess not the slightest knowledge of mathematics,—escape learning any modern language,—have no perception of the distinction between the Tudors

and the Stuarts,—fancy America an island,—and cherish an indistinct notion that there had been a dispute whether the earth went round the sun, or the sun round the earth, and didn't care how it was settled,—that system, however fashionable, was not education. Arnold came, the greatest of schoolmasters, and the system has been reformed. Something still remains to be done.

The ten precious years that a boy spent at the great classical schools were wasted upon hexameters and pentameters. The same time was then equally wasted at the ordinary boarding-schools, upon text-hand and small-hand, and holiday pieces, on which the writing-master flourished swans and angels. Of ladies' education I do not venture to speak. At the 'seminaries' for young gentlemen, the boy who stayed till sixteen, and was then placed in a house of business, found that he had to learn to compose the most ordinary letter; and though he had been through every rule in Walkinghame's Arithmetic, he had yet to penetrate the mysteries of practical book-keeping. Very few left school with any knowledge of decimals. But in no class of schools were young people taught to prepare for the public duties which all Englishmen have to perform. The lad grew into a man, and was put into office. He did exactly what others had done before him. The surveyor of the roads knew nothing of road-making, besides carting a load of stones to a rutty place, and leaving the rest to fate. The overseer, resolved that John Gubbins *should* marry Jane Humphreys, put up the banns. The churchwarden insisted that Farmer Williams should turn away his most trusty and honest ploughman, because he had only two children, and employ the laziest rascal in the parish, who was blessed with four. And the squire, who ruled surveyor, overseer, and churchwarden, took to ordering parish pay at the rate of two shillings a head for every child, and doubling the allowance for bread in times of scarcity. It is marvellous that we ever got out of this Slough of Despond; for Ignorance put us there, and there Ignorance held us.

Crabbe has well described the condition of his 'Borough,' as to one prevailing ignorance of rich and poor:—

'Between the roadway and the walls, offence
Invades all eyes, and strikes on every sense.
There lie, obscene, at every open door,
Heaps from the hearth and sweepings from the floor;
And, day by day, the mingled masses grow
As sinks are disemboqued and kennels flow.'

Those matters, which we now call Nuisances, disturbed no complacency, and suggested no duty, thirty years ago. What an Augæan stable was my native town of Windsor! In the playing-fields of the town, the Bachelors' Acre, was a vast open cesspool, fed with drains from every street, and constantly encroaching upon the cricket-ground. That was a happy spot for healthful recreation! On every road-side was what was familiarly termed 'the black ditch.' In every alley was a lesser black ditch. I could walk nowhere without encountering a black ditch. Yet the Court lived amongst this filthy reek—and no one heeded. Once or twice there was a talk that something must be done—and then, Authority was eloquent against innovation. A poor man dies of typhus: 'Well, Dobson is dead, and the wife and six children must go to the house.' The rash apothecary ventures to say—'There's a horrible ditch at the back of Garden Court—the common drain—poisonous enough to breed fever in every family.' Authority looks awful: 'Ditch, sir! don't talk to me of ditch. We have always had ditches, sir. I never heard before that people died of ditches. Dobson's father lived there all his life. Cheaper to make sewers, is it? Who's to pay for the sewers? Everybody knows that Garden Court doesn't smell of roses; but what of that? The people don't mind,—and why should we?' And then Authority chuckles, and whispers to brother Authority—'Poor Dobson won't get his ten pounds at the next election; look out for a tenant, or a vote will be lost.'

We have done something, since those times, to raise the physical condition of the whole population; and this exer-

tion, shortcoming as it may be, ought to produce a moral elevation. Are we morally improved? That is a great and solemn question. I think we are. There are many evils to be corrected—social and private evils. But the aggregate character of society is improved. Look at Hogarth's print of 'The Cockpit.'¹ Hogarth truly painted a peer and a chimney-sweep, a doctor and a horse-jockey, all busily engaged in the same pursuit. If there be such brutalities now, they are private vices. There may be men whom society calls respectable, who have badger-baiting in their own gardens; and entertain their friends with the old scenes of the Westminster pit, while liveried pages take away the dead rats, and hand about the champagne: but the exhibitions of such atrocities are at an end, or they are secret. Fifty years after Hogarth, Crabbe described a cock-fight:—

'Here his poor bird th' inhuman cocker brings,
Arms his hard heel, and clips his golden wings;
With spicy food th' impatient spirit feeds,
And shouts and curses as the battle bleeds.
Struck through the brain, deprived of both his eyes,
The vanquish'd bird must combat till he dies;
Must faintly peck at his victorious foe,
And reel and stagger at each feeble blow:
When fallen, the savage grasps his dabbled plumes,
His blood-stain'd arms for other deaths assumes;
And damns the craven fowl, that lost his stake,
And only bled and perish'd for his sake.'

Well! The peasant cocker has followed the lordly cocker to oblivion. Even the colliers of Staffordshire, once the great seat of cocking, have forsaken the sport. I have blushed, as a youth, to hear the 'Wednesbury Cocking'—a famous slang song—encored by worshipful men at a public dinner; the mildest of its brutalities being that 'Billy, he whack'd his own feyther.' Police reports daily familiarise us with more hateful cruelties, such as our poet has described—

'the curse, the cries
Of beaten wife, perverse in her replies.'

But nobody makes a joke of such things. There are not

more of such crimes now than formerly ; but they come into the broad daylight of publicity. Let us ask ourselves what would have been the amount of such evils of passion and intemperance, had the whole mass of the people remained uninstructed and neglected ? The publicity that is inevitable now has its useful though painful results, in telling us we must go on to destroy the evil at its root.

Crabbe has described the newspapers of 1784, when there were only seventy-nine newspapers in Great Britain and Ireland, instead of the hundreds of this time ; and when the village reader would

‘ Stay for tidings till they’re three days old.’

The poet had no love for newspapers :—

‘ Here Scandal whets her quill,
And Slander shoots unseen, whene’er she will :
Here Fraud and Falsehood labour to deceive,
And Folly aids them both, impatient to believe.’

Seventy years ago, the newspaper-press had no high character to sustain ; and Crabbe was perhaps right. At this day there is nothing in the world comparable to the general honesty of the British newspapers. The paper that would build its sale on ‘ fraud and falsehood ’—as a few obscure journals have attempted, till they were hooted out of existence—would not be prosecuted now ; it would be despised and die. Newspapers may offend in our days, but they rarely corrupt. They may be prejudiced in their own opinions ; but they give the opinions of others with perfect fairness. Public men speak to the public through the newspapers ; and thus the saying of Burke, that he who read one paper for a year would be of the opinion of the writer, has ceased to be a truth. It is remarkable how soon a demagogue—‘ the obscene bird of night,’—ceases to fly in the sunlight of modern newspapers. Strong writers, as they used to be called, who united the ‘ venom of the shaft ’ to the ‘ vigour of the bow,’ would now write in vain against the evidence of silent facts. Wilkes and Junius were for other times.

Crabbe has given me a text for a few concluding remarks upon popular literature. Let me endeavour to recollect something of my early experience of what was to me popular literature.

From the circumstance of my position, I lived amongst books, ancient and modern. I had the unrestricted range of a large collection of *old* books. I could help myself to every novel, from 'The Grand Cyrus' to the 'Mysteries of Udolpho.' I knew a few great books tolerably well—books which belong to all time. In my course of desultory reading I had sense enough to know that 'a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.*' But I wanted, as every young man wants, something especially suited to my own times. I wanted good elementary books, particularly of a scientific character. Where was I to find them? I tried to set myself task-work with dry books of the day; but, oh, how I wearied! For the union then was complete between the useful and the repulsive in knowledge. I had nothing to lead me by pleasant paths into the high-road of information. I had to scramble through bogs and thickets before I was in the right way. I had no 'Penny Magazine,' no 'Chambers' Journal,' no 'Household Words!' If I wanted a laugh, I had no 'Punch.' There was no Jerrold in those days to show how the comic could blend with the earnest. There was not a cheap weekly miscellany to be had that was not infamous. No wonder that I hungered for fiction. I devoured the old standard dishes again and again. Who could be satiated with 'Robinson Crusoe,' and 'Don Quixote,' and 'The Arabian Nights?' I read 'Gulliver's Travels,' without knowing how crushing and heartless that book was. I read 'Tom Jones' and 'Roderick Random,' without shrinking from their indelicacy; for, in truth, I heard coarse things enough spoken aloud in what was called decent society. But I wanted something of fiction that should come nearer the manners and thoughts of my own generation. Crabbe shall tell what I got—with

* Milton: 'Areopagitica.'

a few exceptions, such as the novels of Godwin and Holcroft—out of the circulating library :—

'When all our childish books were set apart,
The first I read was "Wanderings of the Heart;"
It was a story, where was done a deed
So dreadful, that alone I fear'd to read.
The next was "The Confessions of a Nun,"—
'Twas quite a shame such evil should be done;
Nun of—no matter for the creature's name,
For there are girls no nunnery can tame:—
Then was the story of the Haunted Hall,
Where the huge picture nodded from the wall,
When the old lord look'd up with trembling dread,
And I grew pale, and shudder'd as I read:
Then came the tales of Winters, Summers, Springs,
At Bath and Brighton,—they were pretty things!
No ghosts or spectres there were heard or seen,
But all was love and flight to Gretna-green.'

The very titles of these staple productions of 'The Minerva Press' are quite sufficient to suggest a contrast with the fiction that is now popular. Some of the novelists that have written since those days have taken their place amongst the Classics of our language. We have had Edgeworth, and Austen, and Scott; we have Bulwer, and Thackeray, and Dickens.

Are we improved, then, in our Popular Literature—the literature that will always be most popular—that of the story-teller? We have done, I think, with the ghost school and the Gretna-green school. The Newgate school is gone out, too. We have done with that historical school, which was far more dull than any real history. We have done with the men-and-manners school, which painted such men as never lived, and such manners as never were shown in real life. We have done with the silver-fork school, which despised everything universal, and pretended to show how Lord Booby's house was furnished, and how Lady Grizzle talked in the Opera-box. All are gone. I doubt if we shall see any of them again.

One word more of my early reading.

Of Poetry my new stores were not very alluring. I tried Hayley's 'Triumphs of Temper,' and I may truly say with Byron, 'they triumph'd over mine.' There were 'Scenes of Infancy,' and 'Scenes of Youth,' and 'Village Scenes,' but I could not live in those 'Scenes.' I read 'The Farmer's Boy,' for I knew its truth. 'The Minstrel' was my school prize-book. But I could not stand Pratt, or Bishop, or Holloway, or Harrop. I suppose nobody now has ever heard of these popular authors; and I trust they will never be embalmed in Johnsonian prefaces, as some earlier verse-makers, equally worthless, have been consigned to posterity. From such as these, I went back to my Shakspeare and my Pope, my Burns and my Cowper. Rogers and Campbell, indeed, shone amidst the darkness, each 'a bright particular star.' 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel' had scarcely then come hot-pressed into life; Wordsworth had not entered into the popular mind; Coleridge was mentioned, by the few who knew his name, as a sleepy mystic; Southey was voted dangerous; and Moore was hidden under the sofa-cushions. Byron had not arisen to make a poetical revolution. Crabbe himself was scarcely resuscitated. Keats was exalted to the heavens by one set of critics, and consigned to the Bathos by another; and Shelley was feared and neglected. Tennyson and Browning were in the womb of time. My range of Poetry, in 1807, and for several years after, was narrower than yours, my young friend.

In running over the names of the illustrious of modern Poetry, and modern Romance, it is of the first importance to recollect that we appreciate what we have gained during this half-century. We have got high poetry, and we know that we have got it. Wordsworth became popular when cheap knowledge was presented to the people. We have got Fiction that is the mirror of reality. Dickens spoke to the People when they were beginning to get cheap knowledge; and how they welcomed him! As the aggregate intelligence of a nation is raised, the dull and the mischievous amongst authors soon find their place. Patron-

age and fashion can do nothing. The rapid communication, too, between one people and another people, alike tends to the universal,—upon which all enduring Literature must be built, whatever be its individual form. It is a fortunate circumstance that the most popular things in all literature must be essentially based upon the cultivation of the best parts of our intellectual nature—upon the power of rendering sound knowledge attractive, or of stirring the imagination by fictitious narrative or description that is pleasurable in proportion to its purity and truth. There is really no permanent power in literature but what is universal—and there is nothing universal that is tainted with the desire to gratify a morbid taste in any class of readers, be they high or low.

I have attempted some delineations of past character. The equality of ranks, in the common pursuits of intellect, now gives a tone of uniformity to the aspects of ordinary life, which destroys some individual characteristics :—

‘Society is smoothed to that excess

That manners hardly differ more than dress.’*

But the great characteristics of Classes will always prevail. The callous Doctor, the sporting Parson, the litigious Attorney, the pompous Corporator, the bullying Justice, the flogging Schoolmaster—these who in their power of good or evil moulded, in a large degree, the temper of their times—these are Modern Antiques. Such varieties of the old anti-progressive species are gone. But other varieties will arise, and buzz through their little day. Out of the democratic element may perhaps come as great nuisances as the exclusive has bred amongst us. Knowledge has produced essential changes in one generation. It is ‘a Fountain, such as it is not easy to discern where the issues and streams thereof will take and fall.’† But one thing is clear—Knowledge can never produce half the amount of evil which Ignorance has produced ; and it may reasonably be doubted whether *real* Knowledge was ever productive of evil. The

* Byron.

† Bacon.

wise man, Lord Bacon, who termed Knowledge 'a Fountain,' calls upon us 'to rule and guide the course of the waters, by setting down this position, namely, that all Knowledge is to be limited by Religion, and to be referred to use and action.' To limit Knowledge thus is not to narrow it; for its boundaries are the extremest range of God's creation, to be reverently discovered, step by step, by man's reason. I have no fear of Knowledge. I consider it my especial happiness to have lived in a progressive condition of society—progressive as regards the outward prosperity of the country—progressive in respect of the intellectual advancement of the People. There have been, and there still are, many evils in the transition state through which we are passing. We may have lost some of the simplicity of 'the antique world.' There are strong contrasts of manners, as I have shown in some particulars, between the beginning and the middle of the half-century. There is more display—I fear there is more selfishness. 'Plain living and high thinking' have to be sought as a distinction amongst some of the more ambitious classes. But there never was a time when the great bulk of the community—in spite of many mistakes and omissions of duty—were more true to their inheritance of 'titles manifold' amongst the nations:—

'Sound healthy children of the God of Heaven.'*

* Wordsworth.

THE LEADING PROFESSION.

[The following paper was written before we had a Preventive Police; before Prisons were regulated upon some system, however imperfect; and when the terror of Capital Punishments—always threatened, but capriciously inflicted—was the sole principle upon which crime was sought to be repressed. We are in many respects wiser than we were thirty years ago; but a consideration of what we have amended may lead us to meditate upon what we have still to amend.]

THE choice of a profession was at all times an affair of difficulty, and it has become peculiarly so at a period when the avenues to success, whether in the walks of theology, of law, or of medicine, are blocked up by a crowd of eager competitors. Nor is the path to wealth, by the more beaten track of commercial pursuits, less impeded by the struggles of rivalry, the intrigues of connection, or the overwhelming preponderance of enormous capital. For adventurous young men, not cursed by nature with a modest or studious turn, and who are impatient to take the post of honour by a *coup-de-main*, a state of war offers an ample field for the profession of arms; but in a time of peace that field is narrowed to a very aristocratic circle, and the plebeian spirit learns to be tamed in the never-ending rebuffs of the Horse Guards and of the Admiralty. All things considered, and with a due regard to the necessary education, the certain rewards, and the few chances of failure, it appears to us that the profession which involves the least individual expense in its necessary studies, the aspirants being constantly trained at the public cost—which is supported by the greatest excitement of popular observation so as to satisfy the most insatiate appetite for fame—which presents

the most open field for exertion, so as to leave the adventurer the largest choice of opportunities—and which is fenced round from the attacks of private envy or revenge by the most powerful support of individual functionaries—that most cherished and honoured profession is that of a THIEF!

And, first, of the education of this profession.

We will imagine a youth to whom the honours of his calling are not hereditary. He has been brought up, as other youths are, either in absolute ignorance of the world which has preceded him, and the world which is before him; or with such an acquaintance with the tendencies of mankind as they are learned in the book of history, or the safer volumes of experience, as will satisfy him that the least successful of the sons of men are the most conscientious. If he be utterly uninstructed in book-learning, and yet have a tolerable acquaintance with the things around him, he will see (if he open his eyes) that the one thing needful is money;—that cunning has a much surer grasp of that *summum bonum* than wisdom;—and that the contempt of society is only reserved for the poor. Hence poverty, as Talleyrand said of the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, is worse than a crime—it is a blunder. If he derive his knowledge from the half-truths, half-fables of his species, he will discover that fraud and violence have always secured to themselves a much larger portion of what are called the blessings of life—competency, luxury, high station, influence, command—than sincerity and moderation. If he live in the country, he has constantly presented to his eyes the condition of a vast many miserable people, who are reduced to the utmost extremity of perpetual suffering—their honest pride trampled upon, their affections outraged, their commonest wants unsupplied,—and for no personal demerit that he can perceive, but because they are laborious, patient, inoffensive, easily satisfied, content to do their duty in the station to which they are born. If he abide in a city, he discovers that most direct modes of obtaining a living are ill paid—that squalid filth follows

the scanty earnings of the mechanic—that the tradesman who vends an honest commodity cannot compete with the quack and the puffer—that insolent vice always thrusts modest virtue into the kennel. In either case he perceives that mankind, directly or indirectly, spend their lives in endeavours to abstract more than they have a right to abstract from the property of their neighbours. He commences, by dint of hard reasoning, a professional career of resolving to practise that philosophy which teaches him that the institutions of society are chains only for the weak. If he be a peasant, he tries his hand at poaching; if a London blackguard, at picking pockets. In either case the law soon takes charge of his further education; and he is duly sent to that most instructive *Alma Mater*,—a prison.

The care which is now bestowed upon the nurture of his infant hopes is prodigious. He has abundant leisure for the cultivation of his faculties; he has no anxiety about the events of the passing day; he is introduced to the full enjoyment of the society of the most careless, enthusiastic, and undaunted men in existence, as well as to the ablest instructors in his peculiar art.

All knowledge, but that which is to lead him to excellence in the profession which he now *must* choose, is despised;—all views of the social state, but those which regard man as a predatory animal, are held to be low and unattractive;—all employments of the talents of the human race, but those which present themselves to the lion heart in the shape of burglary, and to the cautious understanding in the not less attractive forms of coining and shop-lifting, are pronounced to be mean and ungratifying.

The facility with which the profession of a thief is acquired is a wonderful recommendation of its excellent and manifold advantages. In this college, the *honours* are bestowed after an examination for which the previous study is very inconsiderable—the ‘wooden spoon’ feels that his rank is by no means settled in the estimation of his examiners, but that a successful adventure may place him

in the first degree of the beloved of Bow-street ;—and even he that is ‘plucked’ for wanting in the reckless qualities by which excellence is attained, may hope to prepare himself next session (the ‘term’ of our houses of felonious maintenance) for the most distinguished companionship of that fraternity, which, above all others, generously delights in imparting its blessings to novices by the most unremitting system of proselytism.

Nor is it any derogation from the agreeable nature of this education (when compared to education in general) to say, that the student often receives bodily chastisement in the progress of his willing labours. The laws have no punishments which touch his mind. If he be remanded to his prison, he is only condemned to a further acquaintance with the agreeable society to which he was introduced when he first entered its walls. He has formed friendships which will last for life ; he is secure of patronage when he comes out again upon the stirring world ; he will, in future, have no lack of counsellors and abettors. Admit that he is sentenced to be privately whipped ; in this he does not differ an ounce from the highest of the land. The boys of the middle classes have been gradually becoming more exempt from the terrors of indecent bodily chastisement ; but inflictions upon the person are still the peculiar privilege of the noble students of Westminster and Eton, and the not less ambitious denizens of Newgate and Brixton. Long may they each enjoy these ancient and politic rights, which have such a decided influence upon the destinies both of the statesman and of the felon !

From the moment that our aspirant leaves his first prison, he becomes a public man. His preparation for the duties of life is complete. He rushes at once into his stimulating career,—and he reaps a full harvest of profit and of fame. Less fortunate candidates for distinction may waste an existence in obtaining a single puff of the newspapers. Thousands of authors die for lack of criticism ; painters go off by scores, because no obscure scribbler ever echoes their names ; the finest of women have been

figurantes at the opera for twenty seasons, without having attained to the recorded dignity of a *pas seul* at the Surrey; and ostentatious citizens have given dozens of dinners, to which some gentlemen of the press were duly invited, and yet never once saw their magnificence, under the head of 'Court and Fashion,' in the 'Morning Post.' But the very first adventure of a thief is fame. Is a watch snatched out of a window in the Strand? ten daily papers, and two hundred and fifty weekly, immediately describe the astonishing incident in the most glowing colours;—is a pocket picked in the pit entrance of Drury-lane? the embryo hero of the evening sees his fame duly chronicled in the morning journals; and, lastly, if by some error in judgment he appear before Sir Richard Birnie, he excites the sympathy of all mankind, being 'a remarkably good-looking and interesting young man, attired' (yes, attired is the phrase) 'in the highest style of fashion, and his hair elegantly arranged.' Who can resist such flatteries as these? After such encouragements, what candidate for the final honours of the New Drop would abandon his stimulating career, and retire (if he could) to the prose of common life,

'Content to dwell in decencies for ever?'

The legislative care which is bestowed upon the commonwealth of thieves must be abundantly gratifying to every member of the profession. Their calling never cankers by neglect; they must have a perpetual vigilance as to what laws are enacted and what are repealed; what is grand larceny to-day, and petty larceny to-morrow. The statistics of their realm, too, are known and registered with the greatest accuracy. The condition of their palaces forms the constant object of magisterial and parliamentary solicitude; and societies are specially constituted in aid of all this official vigilance, to see that their apartments are airy, and their provisions wholesome. The most affectionate care of their health is duly taken; and if, at any period of their lives, foreign travel is recommended, a

country, which is admitted on all hands to be the finest in the world, is specially appropriated for their enjoyment. All this is highly stimulating.

But the great encouragement to the adoption of this branch of the profession of the Bar consists in the rich endowments which society has provided for its cultivation. All the property, and with it all the gratifications, of this earth, are the patrimony of the judicious thief. For him the covetous man gathers his pelf, and the ostentatious man his plate and jewels. In his case there is no tedious waiting for employment; no sighing for years for a 'maiden brief,' as in the law—no starving for life upon a Welsh curacy, as in the Church—no wearing away the best years of life in the sickness of 'hope deferred,' as with a subaltern or a midshipman—no walking the world for a day's work, as with the starving Irish labourer. In this privileged profession, the supply always keeps pace with the demand. The active world is a community of bees, but the thief gets the honey. His business is 'to rove abroad, *centum puer artium*, to taste of every dish, and sip of every cup.' He has no care for the morrow, because he knows that for him the heads and hands of innumerable servants are doing his bidding. He has only to walk forth and choose. He lives in a perpetual belief that the world was made for him,—and he is as right as Alexander was.

The times are past when thieves were persecuted. This may appear a paradox to those who look only upon the surface,—who hear of a score of unfortunates perishing annually at the Old Bailey, or behold the Recorder of London pouring into the ear of sovereignty the tale of their sorrow and their crimes. To believe that the administrators of the laws are in earnest in their endeavour to repress the honest labours of the commonwealth of plunderers is a mere delusion—a mental hallucination—a prejudice which is cultivated with infinite care, for the sole object of rendering the legal possessors of property easy in their minds. It is a pleasing and satisfying belief—'*amabilis insania, et mentis gratissimus error.*' The thieves and

the police magistrates know better. The profession is most diligently patronised by the administrators of the laws ; not to speak it profanely, there are regular articles of coparceny between the thief and those who are falsely imagined to be his pursuers. '*Latro* is arraigned and *fur* sits on the bench.' Those who affect to be hunting out the criminal are the dignitaries of the commonwealth of crime.

The mistaken people who, in general, are hanged, or transported, or immured in solitary cells, or whipped, are not registered in the University of Larceny. They are fools who attempt to do business in a small way, without regard to the corporate rights of Bow-street and Union Hall. They have not graduated, and they must pay the penalty. But a prudent adventurer never enters the higher walks of the profession without protection. He incurs no risks ; he surrenders a handsome portion of his profits to enjoy the remainder in peace 'under his own fig-tree.' To such, the police is not an affair of discovery or of prevention, but of regulation. There is no affectation of a want of union in the several callings of the thief and the officer. They have grown together in happy relationship since the days of Jonathan Wild. A poet of the last century says,

'My evenings all I would with *sharpers* spend,
And make the *thief-catcher* my bosom friend.'

And indeed they are very pretty companions together over their claret. The dignitary sits with his feet under the same mahogany with the returned convict ; or he is *Vice* to the Rothschild of the flash-house, who at that moment is negotiating with the partners of the Bristol Bank, touching the return of twenty thousand pounds' worth of abstracted bills, for the honourable consideration of fifty per cent. and no prosecution.

Civilisation was very little advanced when the commonwealth of thieves was really persecuted. The present administration of the laws against felony is the keystone that binds the arch of depredation. Without magistrates

and officers, who do not prevent crime, but nurse it, men individually would peril their lives against those who invade their property. But all this possible bloodshed is now saved. A well-ordered police, the stipendiaries at once of the public and those who ease the public of their superfluous possessions, accommodates all difficulties; and, gradually, the rights of thieves are as effectually recognised as the rights of any other painstaking class of the community. Look at this 'arrangement, and see, not only how much it has contributed to the respectability of the profession of larceny, but what an insurance of their lives it gives to society, by rendering robbery a quiet gentlemanly art, in which violence is only the argument of bunglers, and which is carried to the highest point of perfection by that division of labour, upon which all excellence, whether mental or mechanical, must be built.

It occasionally happens that the most brilliant example of professional success is apprehended, convicted, and hanged. This is part of the contract by which the commonwealth of thieves has purchased its charter. The compact is—for the police, a share of profits, and no trouble;—for the sons of Mercury, protection in general, and a very sparing selection of needful victims. When the time arrives that the career of individual happiness and friendship is to close, there is no shrinking. The ripened felon is a soldier, under the orders of a commander whom he honours; and it is to him a gratification to look back upon the years of comfort he has secured by this compromise with power, instead of being perpetually hunted into some pitiful occupation, which the world calls honest, by a vigilance which should never sleep. At last he dies. Well! in the latest moment he is a privileged being. Fame hovers around him, from the bar to the gallows. He exhibits great composure on his trial; leaves his defence, with a dignified satisfaction, to his counsel; bows to the judge, when he pronounces sentence; and 'is fashionably dressed in a complete suit of black.' Then come the consolations of spiritual friends. In the interval between the

condemnation and the Recorder's report, he becomes perfectly satisfied that he is purified from every stain ;—after the fatal mandate arrives, he declares that his only anxiety is to die, lest he should fall into his former errors ; and he leaves the world with such exultations of pious people attending him, as martyrs were wont to monopolize, —bowing to the admiring crowd, and ‘sucking an orange till the drop falls !’

DEAR AND CHEAP.

ON the 2nd November, 1667, the pleasure-hunting Samuel Pepys, Esq., goes to the King's Playhouse, where he saw 'Henry the Fourth';—and there he saw something which he deems as worthy of record as Cartwright's acting: 'The house full of Parliament-men, it being holiday with them; and it was observable how a gentleman of good habit, sitting just before us, eating of some fruit in the midst of the play, did drop down as dead, being choked; but with much ado Orange Mall did thrust her finger down his throat, and brought him to life again.' Orange Mall was a person of energy and discretion; and as she sold her oranges to Parliament-men in the boxes of the King's Playhouse, which they sucked without a compromise of their gentility, she imparted many a piece of scandal, and joined in many an



'Fair Lemons and Oranges!'

aristocratic laugh which was louder than the voices of the players. In another entry of his 'Diary,' Pepys says, 'Sir W. Pen and I had a great deal of discourse with Mall, who tells us that Nell is already left by my Lord Buckhurst.' Some sixty years after, Hogarth painted the Orange Malls of his time, in 'The Laughing Audience.' One of these ladies in the boxes is presenting her fruit to an admiring beau in a bag-wig; whilst another, reaching up from the pit, is touching

his ample sleeve, to call attention to *her* basket. Those were the days of dear oranges; when the fruit was an exclusive luxury for the rich. They had been cried in the streets in the days of Ben Jonson;* and in the time of Orange Mall, London heard the cry of 'Fair lemons and oranges—oranges and citrons.' It did not follow that they were cheap. Hogarth's orange-women carry very small baskets. At the end of the last century the orange-seller of the streets was a barrow-woman, described by Porson in his song of 'Pizarro':—

'As I walk'd through the Strand so cheerful and gay,
I met a young girl a-wheeling a barrow;
"Fine fruit, sir," says she, "and a bill of the play."'

The orange-woman of the streets has passed away. The fruit is now so universal that its shops and stalls are to be found in every quarter. It is *the* fruit of London—the cheap luxury that rapid communication has placed within the reach of all ranks. Its progress from the Antilles to the markets of England is a suggestive fact.

The January sun rises brightly over the North Atlantic. It will be a busy day in Terceira and Fayal, and Saint Michael. The orange-trees are bending under their golden produce. The ships are waiting for their lading. The gatherers have been busy in the orange-gardens, and there are piles of the half-ripe fruit heaped up in readiness for the packers. Laughing groups of children and men, merry as haymakers in June, are seated amidst



Oranges.—1841.

* See 'Trivia,' p. 316.

these fragrant heaps, surrounded by large chests, and by stacks of the dry sheaths of Indian corn. A boy sits amongst the calyx-leaves, and, snatching one with a quickness that nothing but habit can give, passes it on to another child, who hands it to a man who sits by the oranges. In a second the sheath is wrapped round a single orange, and handed on to another man, who sits with a chest between his legs, in which he places the protected fruit. The chest is filled with inconceivable rapidity—moved away—covered over with thin boards—tied with a willow-band, and carried to the store by a patient ass, who is burthened with many a hundredweight before his day's work is done.

It is a bitterly cold morning in London at the beginning of March. The north-east wind whistles through the narrow streets, or drives along a cloud of blinding dust through the more open spaces. The sun vainly struggles to penetrate the fog. It is twelve o'clock. A flock of boys tumble over each other as they rush out of the ragged school of Lamb and Flag Alley. One urchin, more heedful than the rest, sees a horseman looking for a house. The bridle is committed to his care for a few minutes—a penny is his reward. The treasure is safely clutched in his hand, for his pockets are treacherous. How is it to be spent? He has tempting recollections of slices of pudding in the window of a little shop—and much does he need some substantial food. But at the corner of the next street appears a Jew boy. He has a basket of oranges—irresistible, at three a penny. Some of these were in that garden of Saint Michael, suddenly ripening under the January sun. They are damaged; and are separated from their companion oranges, who are dignified as 'choice fruit' in Covent-garden. The bargain is ratified. The ragged-school boy, like too many of us, has preferred a luxury to a necessity. But he is not wholly selfish. He recollects his home.

In a damp and close room a sick woman is slowly recovering from a low fever. Her eyes are dim, her lips parched. The boy thinks his remaining orange would do her good. She shakes her head; but looks, and looks again, at the

treat of happier days. The good son peels it. The fragrance is decisive. Her thin hand lifts the orange to her mouth. She is refreshed; she is better. A child's tenderness is perhaps as reviving as the fruit of the fertile Azores.

It is midnight of the same bleak day in March. Carriages are rolling about the realms of fashion; lights glance from many a window. Music floats from one of those temples of gaiety. Out of the crowded ball-room a youth conducts his heated partner to the calmer regions of wines and ices. But there, too, are the oranges of Saint Michael, looking as brilliant in porcelain baskets, under the glare of wax-lights, as when they peeped forth out of their own green and glossy leaves to hail their native January sun. They are as welcome to the daughter of a ducal house as to the ragged-school boy and his sick mother.

Our annual importations of oranges exceed four hundred thousand chests, which contain three hundred millions of the fruit—a wondrous example of the benefits that are daily developing in the unrestricted interchange of the products of the world. Communication, freed from prohibitory and restrictive laws, necessarily becomes rapid communication. Steam has made the orange as completely our own as are the apples of Herefordshire, or the cherries of Kent. My school-boy recollection of the orange was that of a pale and sour fruit—a sickly-looking thing that was dangerous to eat and not very agreeable. The oranges of those days were packed green, and gradually acquired some degree of ripeness, or rottenness, during a tedious voyage from Portugal. Steam now brings the orange to our doors fresh and ripe as the strawberries of Twickenham.

What certainty and rapidity of communication have done for the commerce of oranges, and all other perishable commodities, it has also done for tea. Commerce has had to struggle against oppressive duties; but Commerce held her own, when she freed herself from monopoly. Taxation has worked hard for two centuries to make tea dear; but Com-

merce worked for cheapness in spite of Taxation;—and Taxation has at last found out that it would be wiser to make a partnership with Commerce, than continue to carry on an unequal fight.

About ten years after we have any distinct record of the public or private use of tea in England—that is, in 1670—a tax was imposed upon liquid tea, of eighteen-pence per gallon. In 1660 our invaluable friend Pepys writes, ‘I did send for a cup of tea (a China drink) of which I never had drank before.’ In 1667 the herb had found its way into his own house: ‘Home, and there find my wife making of tea; a drink which Mr. Pelling, the Potticary, tells her is good for her cold and defluxions.’

Mrs. Pepys making her first cup of tea is a subject to be painted. How carefully she metes out the grains of the precious drug, which Mr. Pelling, the Potticary, has sold her at a most enormous price—a crown an ounce at the very least. She has tasted the liquor once before; but then there was sugar in the infusion—a beverage only for the highest. If tea should become fashionable, it will cost in housekeeping as much as their claret. However, Pepys says, the price is coming down; and he produces the handbill of Thomas Garway, in Exchange Alley, which the lady peruses with great satisfaction; for the worthy merchant says, that, although ‘tea in England hath been sold in the leaf for six pounds, and sometimes for ten pounds, the pound weight,’ he ‘by continued care and industry in obtaining the best tea,’ now ‘sells tea for 16s. to 50s. a pound.’ Garway not only sells tea in the leaf, but ‘many noblemen, physicians, merchants, &c., daily resort to his house to drink the drink thereof.’ The coffee-houses soon ran away with the tea-merchant’s liquid customers. They sprang up all over London; they became a fashion at the Universities. Coffee and tea came into England as twin brothers. Like many other foreigners, they received a full share of abuse and persecution from the people and the state. Coffee was denounced as ‘hell broth,’ and tea as ‘poison.’ But the coffee-houses became fashionable at

once; and for a century were the exclusive resorts of wits and politicians. 'Here,' says a pamphleteer of 1673, 'haberdashers of political small wares meet, and mutually abuse each other and the public with bottomless stories and headless notions.' Clarendon, in 1666, proposed either to suppress them, or to employ spies to note down the conversation. In 1670 the liquids sold at the coffee-houses were to be taxed. We can scarcely imagine a state of society in which the excise officer was superintending the preparation of a gallon of tea, and charging his eighteen-pence. The exciseman and the spy were probably united in the same person. During this period we may be quite certain that tea was unknown, as a general article of diet, in the private houses even of the wealthiest. But it was not taxation which then kept it out of use. The drinkers of tea were ridiculed by the wits, and frightened by the physicians. More than all, a new habit had to be acquired. The praise of Boyle was nothing against the ancient influences of ale and claret. It was then a help to excess instead of a preventive. A writer in 1682, says:—'I know some that celebrate good Thee for preventing drunkenness, taking it before they go to the tavern, and use it very much also after a debauch.' One of the first attractions of 'the cup which cheers but not inebriates' was as a minister of evil.

The tax upon liquid tea would not work; and then came heavy customs duties on dry tea. For more than half a century, in which fiscal folly and prohibition were almost convertible terms, tea gradually forced its way into domestic use. In a 'Tatler' of 1710 we read, 'I am credibly informed, by an antiquary who has searched the registers in which the bills of fare of the court are recorded, that, instead of tea and bread and butter, which have prevailed of late years, the maids of honour in Queen Elizabeth's time were allowed three rumps of beef for their breakfast.' Tea for breakfast must have been expensive in 1710. In the original edition of the 'Tatler' we have many advertisements about tea, one of which we copy:—

From the 'Tatler' of October 10, 1710.

'Mr. FARY's 16s. Bohee Tea, not much inferior in goodness to the best Foreign Bohee Tea, is sold by himself only at the Bell in Gracechurch Street. Note,—the best Foreign Bohee is worth 30s. a pound; so that what is sold at 20s. or 21s. must either be faulty Tea, or mixed with a proportionate quantity of damaged Green or Bohee, the worst of which will remain black after infusion.'

'Mr. Fary's 16s. Bohee Tea, not much inferior in goodness to the best Foreign Bohee Tea' was, upon the face of it, an indigenous manufacture. 'The best Foreign Bohee is worth 30s. a pound.' With such Queen Anne refreshed herself at Hampton Court:—

'Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes tea.'

When the best tea was at 30s. a pound, the home consumption of tea was about a hundred and forty thousand pounds per annum. A quarter of a century later, in the early tea-drinking days of Dr. Johnson, the consumption had quadrupled. And yet tea was then so dear, that Garrick was cross even with his favourite actress for using it too freely. 'I remember,' says Johnson, 'drinking tea with him long ago, when Peg Woffington made it, and he grumbled at her for making it too strong. He had then begun to feel money in his purse, and did not know when he should have enough of it.' In 1745 the consumption was only seven hundred and thirty thousand pounds per annum. Yet even at this period tea was forcing itself into common use. Duncan Forbes, in his Correspondence, which ranges from 1715 to 1748, is bitter against 'the excessive use of tea; which is now become so common that the meanest families, even of labouring people, particularly in boroughs, make their morning's meal of it, and thereby wholly disuse the ale which heretofore was their accustomed drink; and the same drug supplies all the labouring women with their afternoons entertainments, to the exclusion of the twopenny.' The excellent President of the Court of Session had his prejudices; and he was frightened at the notion that tea was driving out beer; and thus, diminishing the use of malt, was to be the

ruin of agriculture. Some one gave the Government of the day wiser counsel than that of prohibitory duties, which he desired.

In 1746 the consumption of tea was trebled. The duty had been reduced, in 1745, from 4s. per lb. to 1s. per lb., and 25 per cent. on the gross price. For forty years afterwards the Legislature contrived to keep the consumption pretty equal with the increase of the population, putting on a little more duty when the demand seemed a little increasing. These were the palmy days of Dr. Johnson's tea triumphs—the days in which he describes himself as 'a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, who has for many years diluted his meals with only the infusion of this fascinating plant; whose kettle has scarcely time to cool; who with tea amuses the evenings; with tea solaces the midnights; and with tea welcomes the morning.' In 1785 the Government boldly repealed the excise duty; and imposed only a customs' duty of 12½ per cent. The consumption of tea was doubled in the first year after the change, and quadrupled in the third. The system was too good to last. The concession of three years in which the public might freely use an article of comfort was quite enough for official liberality and wisdom. New duties were imposed in 1787; the consumption was again driven back, and, by additional duty upon duty, was kept far behind the increase of the population. Yet the habit of tea-drinking had become so rooted in the people, that no efforts of the Government could destroy it. The washerwoman looked to her afternoon 'dish of tea,' as something that might make her comfortable after her twelve hours' labour; and balancing her saucer on a tripod of three fingers, breathed a joy beyond utterance as she cooled the draught. The factory workman then looked forward to the singing of the kettle, as some compensation for the din of the spindle. Tea had found its way even to the hearth of the agricultural labourer. He 'had lost his rye teeth'—to use his own expression for his preference of wheaten bread—and he would have his ounce of tea as well as the best of his neighbours. Sad

stuff the chandler's shop furnished him: no commodity brought hundreds of miles from the interior of China, chiefly by human labour; shipped according to the most expensive arrangements; sold under a limited competition at the dearest rate; and taxed as highly as its wholesale cost. The small tea-dealers had their manufactured tea. But they had also their smuggled tea. The pound of tea which sold for eight shillings in England, was selling at Hamburg for fourteen pence. It was hard indeed if the artisan did not occasionally obtain a cup of good tea at a somewhat lower price than the King and John Company had willed. No dealer could send out six pounds of tea without a permit. Excisemen were issuing permits and examining permits all over the kingdom. But six hundred per cent. profit was too much for the weakness of human nature and the power of the exciseman.

Under our recent system of taxation our consumption of tea was enormous, although the duty, upon an average, was half of the retail price. With a tax of 2s. 2½d. a pound, it is clear that, if sound commercial principles, improved navigation, wholesale competition, and moderate retail profits, had not found their way into the tea-trade, since the abolition of the East India Company's monopoly in 1833, the revenue upon tea would have been stationary, instead of having increased a million and a half sterling. All the manifold causes that produce commercial cheapness in general—science, careful employment of capital in profitable exchange, certainty and rapidity of communication, extension of the market—have been especially working to make tea cheap. Tea is more and more becoming a necessary of life to all classes. Tea was denounced first as a poison, and then as an extravagance. Cobbett was furious against it. An Edinburgh Reviewer of 1823 keeps no terms with its use by the poor: 'We venture to assert, that when a labourer fancies himself refreshed with a mess of this stuff, sweetened by the coarsest black sugar, and with azure-blue milk, it is only the warmth of the water that soothes him for the moment; unless, perhaps, the sweetness may be

palatable also.' It is dangerous even for great reviewers to 'venture to assert.' In a few years after comes Liebig, with his chemical discoveries; and demonstrates that coffee and tea have become necessities of life to whole nations, by the presence of one and the same substance in both vegetables, which has a peculiar effect upon the animal system; that they were both originally met with amongst nations whose diet is chiefly vegetable; and, by contributing to the formation of bile, their peculiar function, have become a substitute for animal food to a large class of the population whose consumption of meat is very limited, and to another large class who are unable to take regular exercise.

Tea and coffee, then, are more especially essential to the poor. They supply a void which the pinched labourer cannot so readily fill up with weak and sour ale; they are substitutes for the country walk to the factory girl, or the seamstress in a garret. They are ministers to temperance; they are home comforts. Mrs. Piozzi making tea for Dr. Johnson till four o'clock in the morning, and listening contentedly to his wondrous talk, is a pleasant anecdote of the first century of tea; the artisan's wife, lingering over the last evening cup, while her husband reads his newspaper or his book, is something higher, which belongs to our own times.

There is a contrast as striking between the coffee-houses to which Clarendon sent his spies and those of our own day, as between Mrs. Pepys making tea, and Mrs. Gamp preparing the same refection for her interesting friend of the sick room. Aubrey tells us of Sir Henry Blount, 'When coffee first came in he was a great upholder of it, and hath ever since been a constant frequenter of coffee-houses, especially Mr. Farres', at the Rainbow, by Inner Temple-gate.' Does the spirit of Mr. Farres linger about the Rainbow, as Goldsmith's Dame Quickly lingered about the Boar's Head? At the Rainbow, where there is still abundant company, and merry converse, Barclay's stout has driven out tea and coffee. Old Sir Henry Blount told

his stories, and played his hoaxes, at the Rainbow till he was eighty years of age, denouncing strong drinks, and eulogising the 'executions at Tyburn, which work more upon the people than all the oratory in the sermons.' But if his spirit be permitted to wander, he would find in London that coffee-houses have been exalted and the gallows laid low. He was a bold cavalier; 'a shammer,' as Aubrey calls him, by which he means 'one who tells falsities, not to do anybody an injury, but to impose upon their understanding.' Would he rejoice that there are now some two thousand coffee-houses in London, where the artisan, who has seldom any disposition to be 'a shammer,' may have his cup of tea or coffee for three-halfpence or twopence, and read the newspapers and the best periodical works? This is, perhaps, something better for human happiness than the old palmy days of Tom's and Will's,—of White's and the Grecian.

In the days of Edward II., the villagers who dwelt within a few miles of London daily surrounded its walls with their poultry and eggs. The poulterers were forbidden to become their factors; but unquestionably it was for the interest of both parties that some one should stand between the producer and the consumer. Without this, there would have been no regular production. Perhaps the production was very irregular, the price very fluctuating, the dearth often intolerable. This huckstering had to go on for centuries before it became commerce. It would have been difficult, even fifty years ago, to imagine that eggs, a frail commodity, and quickly perishable, should become a great article of import. Extravagant would have been the assertion that a kingdom should be supplied with sea-borne eggs, with as much speed, with more regularity, and at a more equalised price, than a country market town of the days of George III. It has been stated that, before the Peace of 1815, Berwick-upon-Tweed shipped annually as many eggs to London as were valued at £30,000. Before

the Peace, there were no steam-vessels; and it is difficult to conceive how the cargoes from Berwick, with a passage that often lasted a month, could find their way to the London consumer in marketable condition. Perhaps the eaters of those eggs, collected in the Border districts, were not so fastidious in their tastes as those who now despise a French egg which has been a week travelling from the Pas de Calais. But the Berwick eggs were, at any rate, the commencement of a real commerce in eggs.

In 1820, five years after the Peace, thirty-one millions of foreign eggs found their way into England. They principally came from France, from that coast which had a ready communication with Kent and Sussex, and with the Thames. These eggs, liable as they were to a duty, came to the consumer so much cheaper than the Berwick eggs, or the Welsh eggs, or the eggs even that were produced in Middlesex or Surrey, that the trade in eggs was slowly but surely revolutionised. Large heaps of eggs made their appearance in the London markets, or stood in great boxes at the door of the buttermilk man, with tempting labels of '24 a shilling,' or '20 a shilling.' They were approached with great suspicion, and not unjustly so; for the triumphs of steam were yet far from complete. But it was discovered that there was an egg-producing country in close proximity to London, in which the production of eggs for the metropolitan market might be stimulated by systematic intercourse, and become a mutual advantage to a population of two millions, closely packed in forty square miles of street, and a population of six hundred thousand, spread over two thousand five hundred square miles of arable, meadow, and forest land, with six or eight large towns. This population of the Pas de Calais is chiefly composed of small proprietors. Though the farms are larger there than in some other parts of France, some of the peculiarities of what is called the small culture are there observable. Poultry, especially, is most abundant. Every large and every small farm-house has its troops of fowls and turkeys. The pullets are carefully fed and housed; the eggs are

duly collected ; the good wife carries them to the markets of Arras, or Bethune, or St. Omer, or Aire, or Boulogne, or Calais : perhaps the egg-collector traverses the district with his cart and his runners. The egg-trade with England gradually went on increasing. The import of foreign eggs amounted, in 1852, to one hundred and eight millions.

In 1825, the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland was put upon the same footing as the coasting trade of the ports of England. Steam navigation between the two islands also had received an enormous impulse. The small farmers and cottiers of Ireland were poultry-keepers. Too often the poor oppressed tenants were wont to think—‘The hen lays eggs, they go into the lord’s frying-pan.’ Steam navigation gave a new impulse to Irish industry. Before steam-vessels entered the Cove of Cork, an egg, at certain seasons, could scarcely be found in the market of that city. England wanted eggs ; steam-boats would convey them rapidly to Bristol ; the small farmers applied themselves to the production of eggs ; Cork itself then obtained a constant and cheap supply. The Irish exports of eggs to England have become a great article of commerce. And yet, what a trifling matter an egg appears when we talk of large culture and extensive commerce. Out of such trifles communities have grown into industrious and frugal habits and consequent prosperity. There was a time when the English farmer’s wife would keep her household out of the profits of her butter, her poultry, and her eggs ; when she duly rose at five o’clock on the market-day morning, rode with her wares some seven miles in a jolting cart, and stood for six hours at a stall till she had turned all her commodity into the ready penny. The old thrift and the old simplicity laid the foundations of scientific production.

Making a reasonable estimate of the number of foreign eggs, and of Irish and Scotch eggs, that come into the port of London—and putting them together at a hundred and fifty millions, every individual of the London population

consumes sixty eggs, brought to his own door from sources of supply which did not exist thirty years ago. Nor will such a number appear extravagant when we consider how accurately the egg consumption is regulated by the means and the wants of this great community. Rapid as the transit of these eggs has become, there are necessarily various stages of freshness in which they reach the London market. The retail dealer purchases accordingly of the egg merchant; and has a commodity for sale adapted to the peculiar classes of his customers. The dairyman or poulterer in the fashionable districts permits, or affects to permit, no cheap sea-borne eggs to come upon his premises. He has his eggs of a snowy whiteness, at four or six a shilling, 'warranted new-laid'; and his eggs from Devonshire, cheap at eight a shilling, for all purposes of polite cookery. In Whitechapel, or Tottenham Court-road, the bacon-seller 'warrants' even his twenty-four a shilling. In truth, the cheapest eggs from France and Ireland are as good, if not better, than the eggs which were brought to London in the days of bad roads and slow conveyance—the days of road-waggons and pack-horses. And a great benefit it is, and a real boast of that civilisation which is a consequence of free and rapid commercial intercourse. The cheapness of eggs through the imported supply has raised up a new class of egg consumers. Eggs are no longer a luxury which the working man of London cannot reach.

It is not only in disturbing the old relations between 'cheap' and 'dear,' that commerce exhibits its wondrous effects, but in the manner in which it gives an extension to the comforts of a nation, and raises up new branches of industry of which the existence could never be contemplated. The applications of gutta percha and of caoutchouc belong to our own day. And yet how soon they created new wants by new supplies—at first expensive supplies, and then, when an entire population joined in a demand, supplies in which the principle of absolute cheap-

ness was one of the most remarkable elements. Take the example of caoutchouc.

About a hundred and twenty years ago the artists of Europe received a valuable contribution—a vegetable product of South America and India—which would remove pencil-marks with neatness and expedition. A few bottles of a substance something like leather,—black, polished, marked with lines which seemed indented,—constituted this new importation of a useful curiosity. Its first use determined its name, *India-rubber*.

In the year 1735, some scientific Frenchmen, travelling in South America, ascertained what this substance was, and sent an account of its production to the French Academy of Sciences. It was a substance possessing very peculiar properties,—elastic, and insoluble in water. The natives of South America made waterproof boots of it, and rendered cloth impervious to moisture by applying the gum in its liquid state. Could European science do nothing with it but rub out pencil marks? For about a century, nothing else was done—nothing but rubbing;—and then a sudden start was made, and *India-rubber*, or more properly *Caoutchouc*, became a great material of manufacture. We now defy the rain with an *India-rubber* over-cloak; we keep our feet dry with *India-rubber* over-shoes; we obtain an easy seat with an *India-rubber* air-cushion; we lie upon an *India-rubber* water-bed more softly than upon down, and without a particle of external moisture; our gloves cling round our wrists with an *India-rubber* band; we move freely with *India-rubber* braces and straps, that hold our clothes tightly about us, and yet yield to every muscular exertion; we have not shod ‘a troop of horse with felt,’ but stables and courtyards are paved with *India-rubber*, and carriage-wheels made noiseless by it; we stop our bottles with *India-rubber*, to render them air-tight; we hold our papers in order with little stretching bands, so that official men, as we may hope, will cease to be called red-tapists, and under wholesome public opinion will be at once as firm and as elastic as their *India-rubber* rings; we

bind the broken limb with India-rubber ligatures; we give safety to the voyager by India-rubber life-preservers; the soldier's tent is rendered dry as a pent-house by India-rubber; we build boats of India-rubber; we make hammock-nettings of India-rubber; the buffers of railway-carriages are India-rubber. What, in fact, are the limits to the application of India-rubber? We import annually from 600,000 to 700,000 lbs. of India-rubber,—a small quantity in the gross, but very large when we consider how readily it enters into combination with other materials, and imparts to them its own peculiar character of elasticity and imperviousness to moisture. It seems, indeed, as if it were all-penetrating. Upon the sheet of paper on which we are writing, there are a few of the minutest black spots, and so there will be, we fear, on the sheet printed with these words. They are India-rubber spots. The substance gets into the rags of which paper is made—the dirty coarse rags which modern chemistry bleaches into purity. No care can wholly remove it. The smallest bit of braid will be pounded to atoms in the paper-mill, but the atoms are indestructible, for they are incapable of solution.

I remember (early remembrances are more durable than recent) an epithet employed by Mary Wollstonecraft, which then seemed as happy as it was original:—‘The iron pen of Time.’ Had the vindicatress of the ‘Rights of Women’ lived in these days (fifty years later), when the iron pen is the almost universal instrument of writing, she would have bestowed upon Time a less common material for recording his doings.

Whilst I am remembering, let me look back for a moment upon my earliest school-days—the days of large text and round hand. Twenty urchins sit at a long desk, each intent upon making his *copy*. A nicely-mended pen has been given to each. My own labour goes on successfully, till, in school-boy phrase, the pen begins to splutter. A bold effort must be made. I leave the form, and timidly address

the writing-master with 'Please, sir, mend my pen.' A slight frown subsides as he sees that the quill is very bad—too soft or too hard—used to the stump. He dashes it away, and snatching a feather from a bundle—a poor thin feather, such as green geese drop on a common—shapes it into a pen. This mending and making process occupies all his leisure—occupies, indeed, many of the minutes that ought to be devoted to instruction. He has a perpetual battle to wage with his bad quills. They are the meanest produce of the plucked goose.

And is this process still going on in the many thousand schools of our land, where, with all drawbacks of imperfect education, both as to numbers educated and gifts imparted, there are about two millions and a half of children under daily instruction? In remote rural districts, probably; in the towns, certainly not. The steam-engine is now the pen-maker. Hecatombs of geese are consumed at Michaelmas and Christmas; but not all the geese in the world would meet the demand of England for pens. The supply of *pâtés de foie gras* will be kept up—that of quills, whether known as *primes*, *seconds*, or *pinions*, must be wholly inadequate to the wants of a writing people.

The ancient reign of the quill-pen was first seriously disturbed about thirty years ago. An abortive imitation of the form of a pen was produced before that time; a clumsy, inelastic, metal tube fastened in a bone or ivory handle, and sold for half-a-crown. A man might make his mark with one—but as to writing, it was a mere delusion. In due course came more carefully-finished inventions for the luxurious, under the tempting names of ruby pen, or diamond pen—with the plain gold pen, and the rhodium pen, for those who were sceptical as to the jewellery of the ink-stand. The economical use of the quill received also the attention of science. A machine was invented to divide the barrel lengthwise into two halves; and, by the same mechanical means, these halves were subdivided into small pieces, cut pen-shape, slit, and nibbed. But the pressure upon the quill supply grew more and more intense. A

new power had risen up in our world—a new seed sown—the source of all good, or the dragon's teeth of Cadmus. In 1818 there were only one hundred and sixty-five thousand scholars in the monitorial schools—the new schools, which were being established under the auspices of the National Society, and the British and Foreign School Society. Fifteen years afterwards, in 1833, there were three hundred and ninety thousand. Ten years later, the numbers exceeded a million. Even a quarter of a century ago two-thirds of the male population of England, and one-half of the female, were learning to write; for in the Report of the Registrar-General, for 1846, we find this passage:—‘Persons when they are married are required to sign the marriage-register; if they cannot write their names, they sign with a mark: the result has hitherto been, that nearly one man in three, and one woman in two, married, sign with marks.’ This remark applies to the period between 1839 and 1845. Taking the average age of men at marriage as twenty-seven years, and the average age of boys during their education as ten years, the marriage-register is an educational test of male instruction for the years 1824—28.

But, during the last fourteen years, the natural desire to learn to write, of that part of the youthful population which education can reach, has received a great moral impulse by a wondrous development of the most useful and pleasurable exercise of that power. The uniform penny postage has been established. In the year 1838, the whole number of letters delivered in the United Kingdom was seventy-six millions; in 1852 that annual delivery had reached the prodigious number of three hundred and eighty millions. In 1838 a Committee of the House of Commons thus denounced, amongst the great commercial evils of the high rates of postage, their injurious effects upon the great bulk of the people:—‘They either act as a grievous tax on the poor, causing them to sacrifice their little earnings to the pleasure and advantage of corresponding with their distant friends, or compel them to forego such intercourse altogether; thus subtracting from the small amount of their

enjoyments, and obstructing the growth and maintenance of their best affections.' Honoured be the man who broke down these barriers! Praised be the Government that, *for once*, stepping out of its fiscal tram-way, dared boldly to legislate for the domestic happiness, the educational progress, and the moral elevation of the masses! The steel pen, sold at the rate of a penny a dozen, is the creation, in a considerable degree, of the Penny Postage stamp; as the Penny Postage stamp was a representative, if not a creation, of the new educational power. Without the steel pen, it may reasonably be doubted whether there were mechanical means within the reach of the great bulk of the population for writing the three hundred and eighty millions of letters that now annually pass through the Post Office. Let me add, that I saw the wondrous human machine of the General Post Office on an evening of November, 1853; and that the Inspector told me that the labour of *sorting* the letters was now comparatively small, from the improvement in the writing of the whole community.

Othello's sword had 'the ice-brook's temper;' but not all the real or imaginary virtues of the stream that gave its value to the true Spanish blade could create the elasticity of a steel pen. Flexible, indeed, is the Toledo. If thrust against a wall, it will bend into an arc that describes three-fourths of a circle. The problem to be solved in the steel pen, is to convert the iron of Dannemora into a substance as thin as the quill of a dove's pinion, but as strong as the proudest feather of an eagle's wing. The furnaces and hammers of the old armourers could never have solved this problem. The steel pen belongs to our age of mighty machinery. It could not have existed in any other age. The demand for the instrument, and the means of supplying it, came together.

The commercial importance of the steel pen was first manifested to my senses a few years ago at Sheffield. I had witnessed all the curious processes of *converting* iron into steel, by saturating it with carbon in the converting furnace;—of *tilting* the bars so converted into a harder sub-

stance, under the thousand hammers that shake the waters of the Sheaf and the Don ; of *casting* the steel thus converted and tilted into ingots of higher purity ; and, finally, of *milling*, by which the most perfect development of the material is acquired under enormous rollers. About two miles from the metropolis of steel, over whose head hangs a canopy of smoke through which the broad moors of the distance sometimes reveal themselves, there is a solitary mill where the tilting and rolling processes are carried to great perfection. The din of the large tilts is heard half a mile off. Our ears tingle, our legs tremble, when we stand close to their operation of beating bars of steel into the greatest possible density ; for the whole building vibrates as the workmen swing before the tilts in suspended baskets, and shift the bar at every movement of these hammers of the Titans. We pass onward to the more quiet *rolling* department. The bar that has been tilted into the most perfect compactness has now to acquire the utmost possible tenuity. A large area is occupied by furnaces and rollers. The bar of steel is dragged out of the furnace at almost a white heat. There are two men at each roller. It is passed through the first pair, and its squareness is instantly elongated and widened into flatness ;—rapidly through a second pair,—and a third,—and a fourth,—and a fifth.—The bar is becoming a sheet of steel. Thinner and thinner it becomes, until it would seem that the workmen can scarcely manage the slight substance. It has spread out, like a morsel of gold under the beater's hammer, into an enormous leaf. The least attenuated sheet is only the hundredth part of an inch in thickness ; some sheets are made as thin as the two-hundredth part of an inch. And for what purpose is this result of the labours of so many workmen, of such vast and complicated machinery, destined ?—what the final application of a material employing so much capital in every step, from the Swedish mine to its transport by railroad to some other seat of British industry ? *The whole is prepared for one Steel-pen Manufactory at Birmingham.*

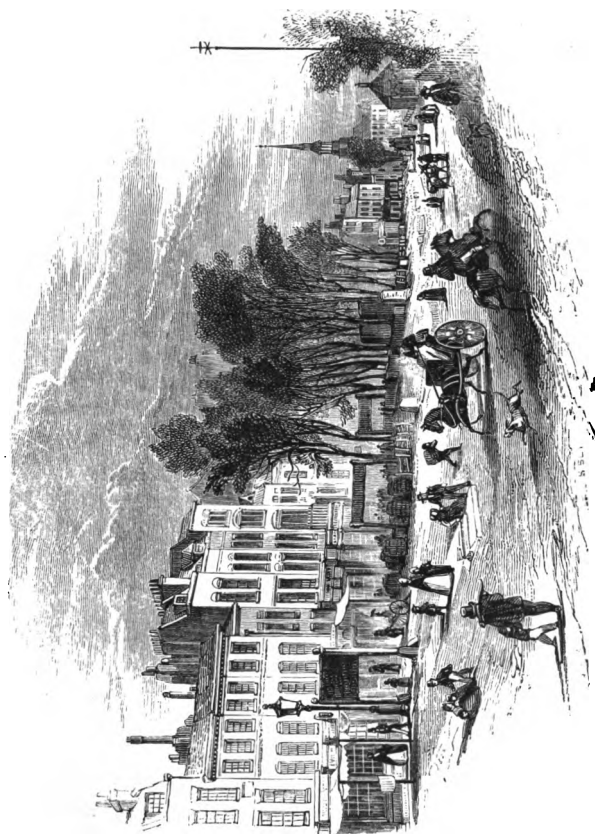
The perfection that may reasonably be demanded in a steel pen has yet to be reached. But the improvement in the manufacture is most decided. Twenty years ago, to one who might choose, regardless of expense, between the quill pen and the steel, the best Birmingham and London production was an abomination. But we can trace the gradual acquiescence of most men in the writing implement of the multitude. Few of us, in an age when the small economies are carefully observed, and even paraded, desire to use quill pens at ten or twelve shillings a hundred, as Treasury Clerks once luxuriated in their use—an hour's work, and then a new one. To mend a pen is troublesome to the old and even the middle-aged man who once acquired the art; the young, for the most part, have not learnt it. The most painstaking and penurious author would never dream of imitating the wondrous man who translated Pliny with 'one gray goose quill.' Steel pens are so cheap, that if one scratches or splutters, it may be thrown away, and another may be tried. But when a really good one is found, we cling to it, as worldly men cling to their friends; we use it till it breaks down, or grows rusty. We can do no more; we handle it as Isaac Walton handled the frog upon his hook, 'as if we loved him.' We could almost fancy some analogy between the gradual and decided improvement of the steel pen—one of the new instruments of education—and the effects of education itself upon the mass of the people. An instructed nation ought to present the same gradually perfecting combination of strength with elasticity. The favourites of fortune are like the quill, ready made for social purposes, with a little scraping and polishing. The bulk of the community have to be formed out of ruder and tougher materials—to be converted, welded, and tempered into pliancy. The *manners* of the great British family have decidedly improved under culture—'*emollit mores*;' may the sturdy self-respect of the race never be impaired.

SUBURBAN MILESTONES.

JEDEDIAH JONES (he was called Jedediah in consequence of the admiration his father cherished for the character of Jedediah Buxton, the great calculator) was a schoolmaster at Barnet. His delight in his occupation was hereditary; for the elder Jones had properly impressed his son with a sense of the high responsibilities and privileges of his calling, and had shown him how superior a schoolmaster was to any of the other mighty functionaries of the land—to a judge, or a minister of state, or even to a bishop. Jedediah grew, in time, to be somewhat of an important personage, especially as his love of learning branched out into sundry matters of abstruse inquiry, by his knowledge of which he not only puzzled his wondering pupils, but occasionally perplexed the most sagacious of his neighbours. He was not a philosopher in the ordinary sense of the word, for he did not busy himself with any of the sciences as they exist in the present day; but he contrived to know something about the theories of these matters as they were received two or three centuries ago, and was always reflecting and experimenting upon propositions that all mankind have agreed to reject as absurd or impracticable. He was acquainted with the past existence of many vulgar errors; but he by no means acknowledged the propriety of that sweeping condemnation of certain opinions which was contained in the title of Sir Thomas Brown's folio. He had considerable faith that he should some day meet the Wandering Jew on the great Holyhead Road: he turned up his nose at the belief that a griffin had not existed, for why should people have them painted on carriages if their ancestors had never seen such things? he was almost

certain that he had himself heard a mandrake shriek when he pulled it up—(on purpose to hear it): and he was quite sure that there were only three Queen Anne's farthings coined, and that he had got one of them. As the old alchemists obtained some knowledge of chemistry in their search after gold, so our schoolmaster obtained a smattering of history and philosophy in his search after those crotchety points of learning which history and philosophy have determined to throw overboard; and thus, upon the whole, he managed to pass with the world as a very wise man, and his school flourished.

There were some matters, however, with all his learning, which puzzled Jedediah Jones exceedingly. One of these dark and important questions was a source of perpetual irritation to him. He took long walks on half-holidays, and generally his face, on these occasions, turned towards London; for he had a secret conviction that his ultimate vocation was to be in that mighty metropolis, and that he should be summoned thither by a special degree of the Royal Society, or the Society of Antiquaries, and be humbly requested to solve some great enigma, of which all mankind, except himself, had missed the solution. In these long walks he was constantly reminded by the milestones that there was one point of learning as to which he still remained in absolute ignorance. This was grievous. These milestones had proclaimed to him, from the days of his earliest recollections, that it was seven miles, or six miles, or five miles, or four miles, or three miles and a half, '*from the spot where Hicks's Hall formerly stood.*' Now in all his books he could find not an iota about Hicks, or Hicks's Hall. For ten tedious years had he been labouring at this riddle of Hicks's Hall. It was his thought by day, and his dream by night. Who was Hicks? How did Hicks obtain such a fame that even the milestones were inscribed to his memory? What was his Christian name? Was he General Hicks, or Admiral Hicks, or Bishop Hicks, or Chief-Justice Hicks? Or was he plain Mr. Hicks? and if so, was he M.P., or F.R.S., or F.A.S., or M.R.I.A.? Why did Hicks



Islington: One mile from the spot where Hicks's Hall formerly stood.—P. 456.

build a hall? Was it a hall like 'the colleges and halls' of Oxford and Cambridge, or like the Guildhall in King-street, Cheapside? Perhaps it was a hall for public entertainments;—perhaps Hicks was a member of one of the City companies, and built a hall which the company in gratitude called after his name. How long ago was Hicks's Hall built? Was it in the Gothic or the Roman style of architecture? Was it of brick or stone? Had it a carved roof? When did Hicks's Hall cease to exist? Was it burnt down? Was it pulled down by the mob? Was it taken down to widen the street? Was it suffered to go to decay and fall down? Was anybody killed when it fell down? Are the ruins still to be seen? Has anybody written the History of Hicks's Hall? Has anybody written the Life of Hicks? Shall I, Jedediah Jones, write this work which the world must be so anxiously looking for?

Such were a few of the perplexing and yet inspiring thoughts which had for years passed through Jones's mind, as he walked from Barnet, Highgate-ward. His difficulties at last became insupportable. He took up his resolution, and he was comforted. A week still remained of the Christmas holidays. He would set out for London, and not see his house again till he had penetrated the mystery of Hicks's Hall.

With his trusty staff in his right hand, and a small bundle containing his wardrobe in a pocket-handkerchief under his left arm, Mr. Jones sallied forth from Barnet, under the auspices of the New Weather Almanac, on a morning which promised to be 'fair and frosty,' in January, 1838. The morning was misty, with rain, which occasionally became sleet, driving in his face. He courageously marched on through Whetstone, and crossed the dreary regions of Finchley Common,—without meeting a highwayman,—which was a disappointment, as he had an implicit belief in the continued existence of those obsolete contributors to the public amusement. He at length reached the northern ascent of Highgate Hill, and his spirits, which were somewhat flagging, received a new impulse. The

milestone proclaimed that he was only five miles 'from the spot where Hicks's Hall formerly stood.' Onward he went, over Highgate Hill, till he arrived at the stone which told him that he was only 'four miles' from the shrine to which his pilgrimage was dedicated. But here was a new attraction—an episode in his journey of discovery. He had reached Whittington's Stone,—and there he read that this redoubted thrice Lord Mayor of London had passed through these repetitions of glory in the years of our Lord 1397, and 1406, and 1419. Here then Whittington had sat—here he had heard Bow Bells—here he had thought of his faithful cat—here he had returned to cherish his cat once more, and to win all the riches of which his cat was the original purveyor. But then a thought came across him as to which was the greater man, Whittington or Hicks? If Whittington had one stone raised to his memory, Hicks had twenty; Hicks, therefore, must be the greater man. Who was Hicks? Where was Hicks's Hall? He was only four miles 'from the spot where Hicks's Hall formerly stood;' the problem would be soon solved.

He at length reached Islington Green, stopping not to gaze upon the suburban gentility of Holloway, nor going out of his way to admire the architectural grandeur of Highbury. He was now only 'one mile from the spot where Hicks's Hall formerly stood.' The stone which proclaimed this great truth reared its proud head, unencumbered by houses, at a distinguished distance from the foot-pavement and the high road. It seemed, as he approached the scene of Hicks's glories, that there was an evident disposition to call attention to the name of the immortal man, whoever he might have been. He was persuaded that he should now learn all about Hicks;—the passers-by must be full of Hicks;—the dwellers must reverence Hicks. He went into a pastrycook's shop opposite the triumphal stone. He bought a penny bun, and he thus addressed the maiden at the counter:—'Young woman, you have the happiness of living near the spot where Hicks's Hall formerly stood. I have walked ten miles to see that place. Which is the

road?" The young woman replied, 'Hicks, the greengrocer, lives over the way; there is no other Hicks about here.' This was satisfactory. Hicks, the greengrocer, must be a descendant of the great Hicks; so he sought Hicks, the greengrocer, and, bowing profoundly, he asked if he could tell him the way to the spot where Hicks's Hall formerly stood? Now Hicks, the greengrocer, was a wag, and his wagery was increased by living in the keen atmosphere of the 'Angel' at Islington, and by picking up something of the wit that is conveyed from the West to the East, and from the East to the West, by the omnibuses that arrive every three minutes from the Exchange at one end, and from Paddington at the other. To Jones, therefore, Hicks answered by another question, 'Does your mother know you are out?'* This was a difficult question for Jedediah to answer. He had not communicated to his mother—good old lady—the object of his journey; she might have disapproved of that object. How could Mr. Hicks know he had a mother? How could he know that he had not told his mother all his anxieties about Hicks's Hall? He was unable to give a reply to Hicks, the greengrocer; so Hicks, the greengrocer, recommended him to get into an omnibus which was standing opposite the door.

Into the omnibus Jedediah Jones accordingly went, and he desired the gentleman called a conductor, to put him down at the spot where Hicks's Hall formerly stood. The gentleman grinned; and something passed between him and another gentleman, called a cad, which had better be trusted to the immortality of their unwritten language than be here inscribed. On went the omnibus, and after a tedious hour Jedediah Jones found the carriage deserted, and the conductor bawled out 'Elephant and Castle, Sir.' During his progress our worthy schoolmaster had put sundry questions to his fellow-passengers touching Hicks's Hall, but he found them of an ignorant and perverse generation; they knew nothing of Hicks—nothing of

* The favourite mode of salutation in the streets in the year 1837.

Hicks's Hall—nothing of the spot where Hicks's Hall formerly stood. The ignorance of the people, he thought, was beyond all calculation; and he determined that not a boy of Barnet should not, henceforward, be thoroughly informed of matters upon which mankind were called upon, by the very milestones, to be all-knowing.

At the Elephant and Castle our traveller had lost all traces of Hicks's Hall. The milestones had forgotten Hicks and his hall. They were full of another glory—'*the Standard in Cornhill*.' What was the Standard in Cornhill? Was it the Royal Standard, or was it the Union Jack? Perhaps it might be the new standard of weights and measures. He was clearly out of the region of Hicks, so he would make his way to the Standard in Cornhill. Who could tell but he might there find the standard of the English language, which he had long been searching for? At any rate they would there tell him of the place where Hicks's Hall formerly stood.

By the aid of another omnibus our painstaking Jedediah was placed in the busiest throng of the London hive. He was in Cornhill. Jones was somewhat shy, according to the custom of learned men,—and he, therefore, knew not how to address any particular individual of the busy passengers, to inquire about the Standard at Cornhill. He did, however, at last venture upon a very amiable and gentlemanly-looking man,—who politely offered to show him the desired spot. The promise was not realised; in a moment his friend slipped from his side,—and Jedediah found that his purse, containing two pounds seven shillings and sixpence, had vanished from his pocket. He forgot the Standard in Cornhill; and in despair he threw himself into a Hampstead stage, resolved not to give up his search after Hicks's Hall although he had only a few shillings in his waistcoat pocket.

In a melancholy reverie Jedediah arrived in the Hampstead stage at Camden Town. He knew that he ought not to go further, unless he was quite prepared to abandon the original object of his inquiry. It was

a bitter afternoon. The rain fell in torrents. He had a furious appetite,—he had lost his purse,—yet still he would not sleep till he had found the spot where Hicks's Hall formerly stood. He left the Hampstead stage, and there was light enough for him to ascertain whether the milestones were still faithful to Hicks. A new difficulty presented itself. The milestone in Camden Town informed him that he was *two miles from St. Giles's Pound*. What was St. Giles's Pound? Why did a saint require a pound? If it was a pound sterling, was there not a slight anachronism between the name of the current coin and the era of the saint? If it were a pound for cattle, was it not a very unsaintly office for the saint to preside over the matter of strayed heifers? He was puzzled;—so he got into a cab, being disgusted with the ignorance of the people in omnibuses, for the opportunity of a quiet colloquy with the intelligent-looking driver.*

'My worthy friend,' said Jones, 'we are only two miles from St. Giles's Pound—what sort of a pound is St. Giles's Pound?' 'For the matter of that,' said the cab-driver, 'I have driv here these ten years, and I never yet seed St. Giles's Pound, nor Holborn Bars,—no, never,—though ve always reckons by them.' 'Wonderful!' replied Mr. Jones,—'then please to drive me to the Standard in Cornhill.' 'The Standard in Cornhill,—that's a good one!—I should like to know who ever seed the Standard in Cornhill. Ve knows the Swan with Two Necks in Lad Lane, and the Golden Cross, and the Vite Horse Cellar in Piccadilly, but I never heard of anybody that ever seed the Standard in Cornhill.' 'Then, Sir,' said Jones, breathlessly, 'perhaps you don't know the place where Hicks's Hall formerly stood?' 'As for Hicks's Hall,' said the cabman, 'it's hall a hum. There's no such place,—no more than the Standard in Cornhill, nor Holborn Bars, nor St. Giles's Pound,—and my oppinnun is, there never wor such places, and that they keep their names on the milestones to bilk the poor cabs out of their back carriage.'

* In 1837 the cab-driver and his fare rode lovingly together side by side.

Jedediah Jones was discomfited. He did not quite understand the cabman's solution; and he had a vague notion that, if the milestones were placed with reference to the Post Office, or St. Paul's, or some place which *did* exist, the back carriage and other carriage of cabmen and hackney-coachmen would be better regulated. He, however, made the best of his position. He spent one of his remaining shillings upon a very frugal dinner; and, wending his way back to Islington, he bestowed the other upon the coachman of a Holyhead mail to convey him to Barnet without further loss of time or property.

AN EPISODE OF VATHEK.

[In the year 1822, the world went mad about Fonthill. Salisbury Plain became populous, with May Fair and Cheapside travelling to see Mr. Beckford's wonders. No profane eyes had ever looked upon his towers and pinnacles—his domes and galleries. There was mystery, then, to combine with what was really worth seeing at Fonthill. Its exhibition and its auction produced as much excitement as a Crystal Palace upon a small scale. The towers of Fonthill are in the dust, with its magnificent builder. They might have fallen, without a revival of my old recollections, had I not considered that the public curiosity to see their works of art was an anticipation of the feeling of a better period. The people saw nothing of Art in those days, but the dingy Angerstein Gallery in Pall Mall; and the state-rooms of Hampton Court and Windsor, at a shilling a head for the showman. The nobility kept their pictures locked up; and Poets' Corner was inaccessible except to sixpences. Other days have come. Fonthill belongs to the Past.]

THE taste for tower-building, and for other architectural absurdities, of which Vathek had set the example, became infectious in the country about Samarah. This monarch was at first indignant that his subjects should presume to copy his extravagances; but his vanity was stronger than his pride, and he left them in the quiet possession of their follies. His most ambitious rival was the merchant Bekfudi. The riches of this superb person were enormous. His caravans every year brought him silks and jewels that would have rivalled a princess's dowry, and the slaves that cultivated his groves of cinnamon might have formed the rear-guard of a sultan's army. He became dizzy with his wealth, and fancied that he was descended from the Assyrian kings;—though his grandfather had carried a basket in the streets of Bagdad.

Bekfudi had a handsome palace and extensive grounds; the hills and the valleys of a little province were his; a

broad lake lingered in his groves of citrons and palms; and the apricots of his garden almost rivalled those which Vathek so prized from the isle of Kirmith. The ladies of his seraglio were as numerous and as beautiful as the harem of the grand vizier, and the other furniture of his palace was equally rare and costly. But Bekfudi began to be satiated with the pleasures and the magnificence of ordinary mortals: in an evil hour he pulled down his palace and sold his women. He built an impenetrable wall round his extensive gardens, and vowed to raise, upon the highest hill which this barrier enclosed, a palace upon a new fashion. Bekfudi had no violent reverence for the religion of his country; and he therefore considered it a sinless profanation to make his dwelling-place like a mosque, and his tower resembling a minaret, though he modestly proposed it to be only ten times higher than the minarets of Bagdad. It was the extravagance of his ambition which prompted him to shut out all the world till he should have finished his mosque; and when his tower rose above the highest pines of the neighbouring hills, he solaced himself with the hope that the peasants who gazed at an awful distance would believe that within its walls dwelt one of the sons of men, as powerful as the Genii, and as mysterious as the Dives.

Bekfudi possessed abundance of taste. His command of wealth enabled him to engross the rare productions of art which were sometimes too costly even for emirs to acquire; and he lavished his gold upon those who could best apply their talents to the excitement of his self-admiration. All the ornaments of his palace had reference to his ancestors; but though the artists, who recorded in fit emblems the mighty deeds of his progenitors, had an especial regard to truth, they sedulously avoided all allusion to the basket-bearer. In a word, the mosque was a very magnificent place. It was the handsomest monument that taste ever reared to pride; and though Bekfudi in his arrogance had tried to make his tower rival the dome of the great mosque at Damascus, and had only been stopped in his pre-

sumptuous aspirings by the equally insolent hurricane, which twice blew it down,—and though in his profaneness he had built his dormitories like the cells of the most pious santons, and had constructed studies and refectories after the models of sanctuaries and shrines,—still the palace was gorgeous and elegant, and such as no subject ever before raised in the dominions of the Commander of the Faithful.

Bekfudi went on for many moons building and embellishing his mosque,—heaping stones upon his tower till the uncivil blasts gave him hints where to stop, and hanging up new draperies of Persian silks till the limited art of the dyer forbade any further change. The superb merchant lived away in a round of selfish enjoyment; his slaves racked their inventions to prepare him viands of the most costly materials; and as his health would not allow him always to drink the red wine of Shiraz, he took care, under the fatal necessity of resorting to so common a beverage as water, to render it palatable by sending caravans and escorts to bring it from a fountain at a hundred leagues' distance.

The great Mahomet, who had commissioned the Genii to mature and then pull down the presumptuous darings of the caliph Vathek, also resolved to crush the ambition of the merchant Bekfudi. But as the pride and power of the mosque-builder were bounded by natural limits, it was unnecessary to work any miracles for his instruction. He lived on in his round of luxuries; and as his caravans came duly over the desert, and his ships were seldom lost upon the sea, he thought that the spices and the fruits of his fertile isles would last for ever. But there was a sudden change in the fashions of Samarah. The cooks began to make their comfits without cinnamon, and the green dates of their native plains came into request, to the exclusion of the dried fruits of our wealthy merchant. His spices and his figs lay rotting in his warehouses, and, for the first time in his life, he began to think that his mine of wealth was not inexhaustible.

Thirty moons had passed before Bekfudi ceased to pull down and build up the apartments of his mosque, or to send a hundred leagues for his water. The pastry-cooks were inexorable, and his own household even could not endure the flavour of cinnamon. He at length discharged his masons and his carpenters, and, as a great effort of economy, abridged his table of one of the fifty-two dishes with which it was daily covered. But all these privations were unavailing; Bekfudi was in debt, and his creditors would not wait for a change in the taste for spices. He resolved to invite all Samarah to see his mosque, and to purchase his curiosities. For three moons all Samarah went mad. Away ran the idle and the busy, to scramble up Bekfudi's tower,—to wander about his long galleries upon carpets from Cairo,—to touch his gold censers, or to pore upon his curious pictures. As to his books, Bekfudi carefully locked them up. He was a great commentator, and his relish for theological speculations led him to fear that his performances might introduce him to too close an acquaintance with the mufti and the cadi.

Amongst the mob who had been to see Bekfudi's tower, was a clever little Persian Jew, who had the reputation of being one of the most discreet dealers in Samarah. Did a courtier require a thousand piastres to bribe a judge, our little Jew would raise the sum in a moment, upon the pledge of the courtier's carbuncle; or did a lady of the seraglio desire a pound of gold dust to fee an eunuch, our little Jew would furnish it upon the most moderate interest. His warehouses were full of the moveable treasures of all the great men of the palace, from the grand vizier to the principal mute; and everybody vowed that he was the honestest Jew in the world, and it was a great pity so useful and so clever a trader should be a dog of an infidel.

Bekfudi had a hatred of all Jews; but, nevertheless, our little factor contrived to approach him. 'He had come to proffer his services to the great merchant; he humbly proposed to purchase his matchless curiosities, and his

magnificent furniture.' 'What! he, the giaour from Persia? he presume to offer a price for rarities that monarchs might covet?' 'Yes: and moreover, he would purchase his books and his paintings, his vessels of gold and of silver, his wine, his ——.' The merchant was in a rage, and drove the Jew from his presence; but he quickly recalled him. 'Slave,' cried Bekfudi, 'I will hold a moment's parley with thee. How much wilt thou give for my topaz cup, and my goblet set with emeralds?' 'I will not purchase these alone,' said the Jew, 'but I will purchase thy lands, and thy mosque, and thy silken draperies, and thy woven carpets, and thy golden vessels, and thy jewels, and thy books, and thy pictures, and all that thy palace contains; and here, without, I have twenty dromedaries laden with four hundred thousand sequins, which shall be thine.' Bekfudi was in a rage, but the eloquence of the dromedaries prevailed; and that night the little Jew locked up the mosque with the airs of a master.

The mob from Samarah was soon dispersed; and Bekfudi prepared with many a sigh to leave a palace of which he had so long been the uncontrolled lord. The little Jew haunted him from gallery to gallery, and from the gloom of the sanctuary to the sunlight of the 'great lantern. With the most provoking malice he dwelt upon the beautiful proportions of this pavilion, and the magnificent furniture of that saloon; and swore that none of the monarchs of the world could rival the great merchant in taste and splendour. 'And what will you do with this unequalled palace?' said Bekfudi. 'I have bought it for a dealer in sulphur,' replied the Jew. The pride of Bekfudi was ground into the dust; but he was curious to see the rival of his wealth and the inheritor of his possessions. It was agreed that they should meet at dinner.

The hour came, and Bekfudi appeared in the grand saloon, attired in a splendid vest;—the aigrette of his turban was composed of the largest diamonds, and the plume that it bore was from the wing of a bird of paradise.

His delicate hands were washed with the choicest essences, and the perfumes of his garments plunged the senses into a languor which nothing but the excitements of the most exquisite viands could dissipate. He expected to have met, in the dealer in sulphur, a personage whose riches would have procured for him some of the refinements which belonged to the dealer in spices;—but how was he humiliated when a miserable old man presented himself, as ugly as a *faquir* that had been doing penance for fifty years, wrapped round with a wretched robe of dirty cotton, and his head surmounted with a beastly turban, that all the waters of Rognabad could never purify! The forehead of this captivating personage was covered with knots and wrinkles, his bleary eyes twinkled in their little pursed-up sockets, his enormous mouth exhibited three teeth of the most delicious blackness, and his rheum was freely bestowed upon those whom the flavour of his breath did not keep at a respectful distance. Bekfudi shrieked and shouted for his dwarf; but the obsequious Jew called in a loud voice for dinner, and the unhappy merchant was constrained by his politeness to take his seat at the board. The new possessor of the mosque was equally attractive in his diet; a ragout of garlic was served up for his especial pleasure; and as he dipped his grimy hands into the golden dish, Bekfudi would have fainted at the odour of the savoury steams, had not his faithful dwarf thrown the reviving attar over his forehead, and forced a cup of sherbet down his throat. The mouth of the dealer in sulphur distended into an audible grin, and he pledged the dainty merchant in execrable brandy. Their conversation at length became interesting. The man of sulphur had a most agreeable collection of oaths; and as he swore by Solomon and Eblis, by the sacred camel and the dog of the seven sleepers, the man of spice perceived that he had a high reverence for the mysteries of theology;—and a wonderful sympathy in this particular grew up between them. They embraced and parted; but Bekfudi never forgot the garlic.

The little Jew soon applied his master's purchase to good account. Within a week the superb merchant began to indulge a wish for the possession of some of his former most splendid baubles; he bethought him that his free habit of expressing his thoughts in the broad margins of his beautiful manuscripts might one day cause some awkward inquiries; and he was desirous of securing some pictures, of which he thought none but himself knew the peculiar value. He of the dirty hands was as ready to comply with these reasonable wishes, and Bekfudi began to think that his turban and his garlic might in time be endurable. The articles were selected, but the little Jew had yet to name the price. Bekfudi raved and tore his hair when a fourth of his four hundred thousand sequins were demanded for what had cost even him not a tenth of the sum. He raved and tore his hair; but the Jew and the sulphur-merchant were calm. Bekfudi had not yet learned to subject his desires to his circumstances; and two dromedaries marched off with their costly load.

The Jew and his merchant passed the winter very industriously. From his warehouses in Samarah, this active dealer brought all the glittering pledges which the misfortunes of his clients had left unredeemed; and he decorated the mosque, like a grand bazaar, with a great many new curiosities, and a great many rare commodities with fine names from the east and the west, which the artists of Samarah could manufacture as well as those of Persia or China. The little Jew knew where to find expert limners, who could imitate the paintings even of the celebrated Mani, so as to deceive the most critical eyes; clever copyists, that would transcribe the tales and poems of Arabia with a correctness that would enchant the most exquisite connoisseurs; and acute chemists, that would give to the secretly pressed grape-juice of the gardens of Bekfudi himself, the inimitable flavour of the wines of Shiraz or Kismische. The little Jew had, however, not quite so complete a judgment as the builder of the mosque, and he therefore committed a few mistakes with a very enterprising spirit.

Amidst the solemn and subdued splendour of the sanctuary, upon which Bekfudi most prided himself, he hung up an enormous mirror which brought all the varied colours of the neighbouring galleries, and all the garishness of day, into the heart of its former deep and impressive gloom; and in the hall which the spice-merchant had dedicated to the worthies of his country, he stuck up the statue of one of the rebellious princes who had presumed to contend against the justice of the great Haroun al Raschid. But the little Jew was yet a most deserving factor. All Samarah again flocked to the mosque with the great minaret; and all Samarah came this time with money in their vests, to purchase some relic of the magnificent Bekfudi. Every one was pleased, except the unhappy builder of the palace, for every one was agreeably relieved of his sequins at his own free-will. He alone writhed under the mortifications of his pride, and the outrages upon his taste. He stalked one day into the palace of his splendour, now metamorphosed into one large bazaar, and with a yell of fury he overthrew the statue of the foe of the caliph, and shivered into a thousand pieces the mirror which deformed the sanctuary. He then coolly paid the price which the Jew demanded, and retired to a humble dwelling without a minaret, purposing to pass the remainder of his days in composing treatises on temperance and humility—but ending in building another tower.

THE ETON MONTEM.

AMONGST the 'Memorable Things Lost' is the Eton Montem. Railroads destroyed it: for they made it vulgar. White-chapel turned out for the last Montem, as it turns out for the Lord Mayor's show—and the aristocratic school would no longer indulge the mob with a cheap holiday. Let me remember Montem, as I last saw it in 1820.

London gave up its Poet of Mayor's Day a century ago. Eton retained its Montem Poet till he went the way of other immortals. The Poet was a more prominent personage in the ceremony of Montem than the Head-master of the college. But the reader must permit me to throw my remembrances into a dialogue between three or four friends, who came to look at the triennial show,—to laugh at it, or to defend it:—

'Who is that buffoon that travesties the travesty?' inquired Frazer. 'Who is that old cripple alighted from his donkey-cart, who dispenses doggrel and grimaces in all the glory of plush and printed calico?'

'That, my most noble cynic,' said Gerard, 'is a prodigious personage. Shall birthdays and coronations be recorded in immortal odes, and Montem not have its minstrel? He, sir, is Herbertus Stockhore; who first called upon his muse in the good old days of Paul Whitehead,—run a race with Pye through all the sublimities of lyres and fires,—and is now hobbling to his grave, after having sung fourteen Montems, the only existing example of a legitimate laureate. Ask Paterson about him;—he is writing a quarto on his life and genius.'

'He ascended his heaven of invention,' said Paterson, 'before the vulgar arts of reading and writing, which are banishing all poetry from the world, could clip his wings.'

He was an adventurous soldier in his boyhood ; but, having addicted himself to matrimony and the muses, settled as a bricklayer's labourer at Windsor. His meditations on the house-tops soon grew into form and substance ; and, about the year 1780, he aspired, with all the impudence of Shadwell, and a little of the pride of Petrarch, to the laurel-crown of Eton. From that day he has worn his honours on his "Cibberian forehead" without a rival.'

'And what is his style of composition?' said Frazer.

'Vastly naïve and original ;—though the character of the age is sometimes impressed upon his productions. For the first three odes, ere the school of Pope was extinct, he was a compiler of regular couplets, such as—

"Ye dames of honour and lords of high renown,
Who come to visit us at Eton town."

During the next nine years, when the remembrance of Collins and Gray was working a glorious change in the popular mind, he ascended to Pindarics, and closed his lyrics with some such pious invocation as this :—

"And now we'll sing
God save the King,
And send him long to reign,
That he may come
To have some fun
At Montem once again."

During the first twelve years of the present century the influence of the Lake School was visible in his productions. In my great work I shall give an elaborate dissertation on his imitations of the high priests of that worship ; but I must now content myself with a single illustration :—

"There's Ensign Rennell, tall and proud,
Doth stand upon the hill,
And waves the flag to all the crowd,
Who much admire his skill.
And here I sit upon my ass,
Who lops his shaggy ears ;
Mild thing ! he lets the gentry pass,
Nor heeds the carriages and peers."

He was once infected (but it was a venial sin) by the heresies of the Cockney school; and was betrayed, by the contagion of evil example, into the following conceits:—

“Behold *Admiral Keate* of the terrestrial crew,
Who teaches Greek, Latin, and likewise Hebrew;
He has taught Captain Dampier, the first in the race,
Swirling his hat with a feathery grace,
Cookson the Marshal, and Willoughby, of size,
Making minor Sergeant-Majors in looking-glass eyes.”

But he at length returned to his own pure and original style; and, like the dying swan, he sings the sweeter as he is approaching the land where the voice of his minstrelsy shall no more be heard. There is a calm melancholy in the close of his present Ode which is very pathetic, and almost Shakspearean:—

“Farewell you gay and happy throng!
Farewell my Muse! farewell my song!
Farewell Salthill! farewell brave Captain!”

Yet, may it be long before he goes hence and is no more seen! May he limp, like his rhymes, for at least a dozen years; for National Schools have utterly annihilated our hopes of a successor!

Paterson finished his apostrophe at a lucky juncture; for the band struck up, and the procession began to move.

We have reached the foot of the mount at Salthill,—a very respectable barrow, which never dreamt, in its Druidical age, of the interest which it now excites, and the honours which now await it. Its sides are clothed with mechanics in their holiday clothes, and happy dairy-maids in their Sunday gear;—at its base sit Peeresses in their barouches, and Earls in all the honours of four-in-hand. The flag is waved; the scarlet coats and the crimson plumes of the Etonians float amongst us—‘the boys carry it away, Hercules and his load too,’—and the whole earth seems made for the enjoyment of one universal holiday.

‘And is this all?’ said Frazer, in a tone of querulous

contempt, which became almost positively mournful in his Doric dialect;—‘is this all that these thousands of silken ladies and silly clowns are come to gaze upon? Out upon such tomfoolery, whose origin is as obscure as its end is pointless.’

Paterson at once took up the cudgels.—‘And I say, out upon your eternal hunting for causes and reasons. I love the no-meaning of Montem. I love to be asked for “Salt,” by a pretty boy in silk stockings and satin doublet, though the custom has been called “something between begging and robbing.” I love the apologetical “*Mos pro Lege*,” which defies the police and the Mendicity Society. I love the absurdity of a Captain taking precedence of a Marshal; and a Marshal bearing a gilt bâton, at an angle of forty-five degrees from his right hip; and an Ensign flourishing a flag with the grace of a tight-rope dancer; and Sergeants paged by fair-skinned Indians and beardless Turks; and Corporals in sashes and gorgets, guarded by innocent Polemen in blue jackets and white trousers. I love the mixture of real and mock dignity—the Provost, in his cassock, clearing the way for the Duchess of Leinster to see the Ensign make his bow; or the Head Master gravely dispensing his leave, till nine, to Counts of the Holy Roman Empire and Grand Signiors. I love the crush in the cloisters and the mob on the Mount—I love the clatter of carriages and the plunging of horsemen—I love the universal gaiety, from the peer who smiles and sighs that he is no longer an Eton boy, to the country-girl who marvels that such little gentlemen have cocked hats and real swords. Give me a Montem with all its tomfoolery—I had almost said before a coronation—and even without the aids of a Perigord-pie and a bottle of claret at the Windmill.’

‘If there were some association,’ replied Frazer, ‘which could, in the slightest degree, connect the pageant with the objects of a royal school of learning—(I had expected at least to have heard a Latin oration)—I would not so much reprehend it; but for a procession in pumps, along a dusty road, to end in the College Exercise of a King’s Scholar

waving a banner, is too absurd for any fancy to dress up a vindication.'

'A vindication of a ceremony that makes twenty thousand people happy!' exclaimed Gerard: 'the very scene before the window furnishes a ready answer to every objector. Here is folly enough in conscience; but it is the folly of an age when folly sits easily and gracefully upon us. Did you ever see an installation? The mantles are not much finer than little Sutton's, and the plumes are not much more exalted than lofty Platt's; and then, for a procession, we beat them hollow. Look at the eight beautiful boys that attend the Captain—their ages and figures are pretty equal, and their eyes beam with a joy which sparkles like their spangles—is not this something more natural and pleasing than a train of decrepit Dukes or hobbling Marquises, where the flowing mantle but ill conceals the shrunk calf, and the ostrich-feathers nod over sunken eyes and wrinkled cheeks?'

'I think,' quoth William Payne, as they moved to the Windmill garden—he had, till that moment, been a listener to the rival opinions)—'I think Montem may be defended upon very reasonable grounds; it encourages the arts and manufactures of the country, improves the revenue, and is altogether consonant with the soundest principles of political economy.'

'A fig for your political economy!' exclaimed Gerard, as they entered the garden,—'here's a scene! What but Montem could have brought together so many divine shapes, such beaming eyes? How gracefully they lounge through the shadowy walks! how they stud the lawn with hues more delicate than the lilacs; how they beat time with their eloquent fingers to "Love among the roses!" how they smile upon the slim lads, who, after the sixth glass, come amongst them to make conquests! It is a right English scene; there is the staymaker's wife from Thames-street elbowing a Cavendish, and a gentleman-commoner of Cambridge playing the agreeable to the

farmer's pretty daughter from Cippenham-green. Frazer, Frazer, abandon your heresy !'

'It is, indeed, an English scene,' said Paterson. 'Beneath that elm stands one of our great Etonians ; he is evidently pleased. There is a smile of pensive joy playing about his lips, and his eyes are lighted up with a fond recollection of happiness that is past away. I dare be sworn that George Canning, the first of living orators, the statesman whose genius is piercing its way through the dark clouds of Europe's destiny, is even now looking back with more real pleasure to the triumphs of Gregory Griffin, than to the honours of the most successful policy ; and is feeling, with a true philosophy, that the swords and plumes of Montem are worth as much—perhaps much more—than the ribbons and stars of a riper age—"a little louder, but as empty quite."'

'And there,' said Holyoake, 'stands his fearless and all-knowing rival ;—and he, too, is pleased. I see no frown gathering like a whirlwind about the brows of Henry Brougham. He is chatting with a happy little hero of buckles and silk-stockings, as delighted himself as if he were perfectly unconscious of briefs and Brookes's. Montem for ever, say I, if it were only that it can make two such men forget the cares and passions of their ordinary life, even for a few hours.'

'Come,' said Gerard, 'politicians are every-day persons on such occasions as these ; I can see these "foremost men of all the world" for half-a-crown, any night between this and the prorogation. Look yonder—there is a mother kissing her boy who is just arrived to the dignity of the fifth form, and the privilege of a Corporal's coat—while his lovely sister gazes on him with a speechless admiration, and wishes that "heaven had made her such a man." That trio alone redeems Montem from all its folly.'

'I can behold such a piece of the pathetic any day,' said Frazer, 'at an "establishment" at Islington, or a "seminary" at Camden Town.'

‘I will not attempt to reason with Frazer,’ said Gerard, ‘about the pleasures of Montem; but to an Etonian it is enough that it brings pure and ennobling recollections—calls up associations of hope and happiness—and makes even the wise feel that there is something better than wisdom, and the great that there is something nobler than greatness. And then the faces that come about us at such a time, with their tales of old friendships or generous rivalries. I have seen to-day fifty fellows of whom I remember only the nicknames;—they are now degenerated into scheming M.P.’s, or clever lawyers, or portly doctors;—but at Montem they leave the plodding world of reality for one day, and regain the dignities of sixth-form Etonians.’

ITEMS OF THE OBSOLETE.

THE changes that are constantly going forward in the external aspects of society require the lapse of a generation or two to make a due impression upon our senses and our reason. One form of life so imperceptibly slides into another, that we observe no striking contrasts till we look back from our age to our youth, or study, with a purpose of comparison, the pictures which the novelists or dramatists of one period have painted, and then turn to the same occasional records of another period, by the same class of true historians. Thus we see distinctly that Defoe lived in a condition of society very different from that in which Fielding lived, and that Smollett was describing scenes and characters which could never have offered themselves to the observation of Dickens. It is the same with the painters. Hogarth's men and women are essentially unlike those of Gillray, and Gillray's notabilities never to be confounded with those of Doyle or Leech. As a boy, I was familiar with Hogarth. But as pictures of a life that was patent to me, how could I comprehend the cassocked parson on his lean horse, and his daughter alighted from the York Waggon? * A fine lady beating hemp in Bridewell was equally incomprehensible. † I had never seen such a smart industrious apprentice working at a hand-loom as Hogarth showed me; nor such an idle one, gambling with blackguards upon a tombstone, while sober people were going to church. Never beheld I a little boy in a laced cocked-hat, ‡ nor saw a bonfire in the middle of the streets on a rejoicing-night. § Grenadiers wore other caps than I

* Harlot's Progress, plate 1.

‡ Evening.

† Harlot's Progress, plate 4.

§ Night.

observed in 'The March to Finchley;' and in the stage-coach of my early days there was no literal basket hung behind, in which sat an old woman smoking a pipe.* As a painter of living manners Hogarth was obsolete in the first decade of this century. But how priceless as a painter of domestic history!

I look back upon my native town as I remember it as a schoolboy.† How changed is it in its everyday life—in a hundred minute changes that are not peculiar to my birth-place, but which belong to the universal revolutions of fifty years! How obsolete are many of the familiar things that seemed a part of my early being! A mere list of them would suggest many thoughts not unprofitable to those who know that the progress of a generation is to be read in other memorialists than Hansard.

Windsor was an ill-built town—a patchwork town of encroachments upon the castle, and of lath and plaster tenements run up cheaply upon collegiate and corporate leaseholds. There was nothing ancient in the town, except the church, which was swept away some thirty years ago. 'Mine host of the Garter' had no antique hostelry; and 'Herne's Oak' was a very apocryphal relic. Inns there were, with historical signs; but the 'Royal Oak' of Charles II., 'The Queen's Head' of Anne, and 'The Duke's Head' of the Culloden executioner, were only antique in premature decay. 'The usual neglect of all country towns clung to Windsor—filthy gutters and unswept causeways.‡

My native town was a Corporate Borough. The Corporation was no abstract authority. It was on all possible occasions visible to the public eye, in solemn processions of red gowns and blue, with the mace-bearer in the front,

* Country Inn-yard.

† In 'Windsor, as it was,' I have attempted a picture of the Court-Windsor—the Castle. The present paper has reference solely to the Borough. Windsor, as I knew it as a youth, was a singular mixture of the poetical and the prosaic—of the poetical in its antiquities and its regalities—of the prosaic in its mean modern town and its very narrow society.

‡ Of its ancient Black Ditches I have spoken elsewhere, p. 417.

and the beadle in the rear. The Corporation marched to church in toged state; and three times a year it astonished the children by this array of grandeur, when it proclaimed a gingerbread fair at street corners, and not a hot spice-nut could be sold till the mace-bearer had shouted 'Oh yes!' I fear all this glory is departed from the land. Elective corporators now go to church in frock coats; and the charter of Charles II., which bestowed upon the Borough three fairs and two market-days, and regulated the buyers and sellers, is held to be as little worth preservation as the edict of Jack Cade that 'seven halfpenny loaves should be sold for a penny.'

The market-bell! Is that rung now? I fear not. There was something deeply impressive in that bell. It spoke loudly of the majesty of the law, which then aspired to regulate some domestic as well as all foreign commerce. The stalls were duly set. The butchers had hung up their joints; the farmer's wife had spread her fowls and her butter upon a white cloth; onions and apples stood temptingly on the pavement side. But not an atom could be sold till the market-bell had rung.

There were laws then against 'forestalling,' with cognate crimes termed 'badgering,' 'regrating,' 'engrossing.' But in the seventh and eighth years of Queen Victoria such statutes were repealed, as being 'made in hinderance and in restraint of trade.' What a solemn thing it appeared to my juvenile understanding to be assured that it was unlawful even to handle a goose till the bell said, 'you may bargain!' There was a board exhibited, which told of heavy penalties, if early housewives were disobedient to the mandates of that bell, and dared to chaffer before other housewives were awake. I used to ponder upon the wisdom of our ancestors, that so regulated the common affairs of life; and forbade the lieges to buy and sell in the same market, which was 'regrating;' or to buy wholesale at all, which was 'engrossing;' or to buy before the whole world was awake and ready to buy, which was 'forestalling.' That market-bell is silent for ever, even though Black-

stone proclaimed how wise were the laws of which it was the voice.

And then there was the Pie-Powder Court, upon the evening of the fair. In the Town Hall sat the justices in state till midnight. There was a supper, no doubt; but they sat there for the public good, that offenders might be summarily dealt with before the dust of the feet—*pie'd poudre*—was shaken off. That was the interpretation which the learned imparted to me—the official etymology, which showed what a noble instrument was the law, when mayor and aldermen kept out of their beds to make offence and punishment go together. A truer etymology shows that the Pie-Powder Court was the court to determine disputes between pedlar and pedlar, the *pie'd puldreux*, of Scotland as well as England. The 'dustifoot' himself is nearly gone; and the court of the 'dustifoot' is gone before him. Yet it was an inoffensive court. Like Chancery it did little; but unlike Chancery it charged little.

The shops of the Borough were not in those days very brilliant. The window-panes were small; and the show in the windows not greatly attractive. There were no tempting tickets of 'this chaste article only 14s. 10d.' Customers went to the shop for what they wanted, and seldom disputed the price if they had an account. Everybody had an account; for there was a very queer and limited currency. A guinea was a rarity; and so was a shilling with a visible King's head. The sixpences, shillings, and half-crowns were thin pieces of metal, not always silver, which passed rather as counters than as money. Intrinsically, when good, they were worth about half their nominal amount. How has my boyish heart rejoiced at the useless gift of a pretty shilling,—that is, a shilling with a perfect obverse and reverse! I would put such a rarity to my small store of handsome half-crowns of the first and second Georges, which we used to call 'pocket-pieces,' and gaze at them as sacred things, which it would be profanation to employ as money. It is difficult to look back upon such a state of affairs and comprehend how the business of life went on. Cautious

tradesmen would rather 'book' your purchases than take your doubtful silver; and there was a sort of Lynch law amongst some, that when a bad coin was tendered, consciously or unconsciously, the hammer and nail were ready to pin the offensive thing to the deal counter, as a terror to all evil-doers. Payments of some amount were often made in copper penny-pieces. A Bank of England one-pound note was a suspected thing, for forgeries were by no means uncommon, even though periodical hangings of the forgers and utterers were holiday spectacles throughout the land. The dirty local notes were the one currency—though sometimes a bank stopped payment. The country banker would also receive very small sums upon interest—for there were no Savings'-banks; and then, when a crash came, great and wide-spreading was the misery. The dirty one-pound note is gone; and so is the worn-out money. No school-boy now values a new shilling, except as an exchanger; and if his grandmother were to give him 'a pocket-piece,' it would not remain long in his pocket.

My native town, I am afraid, did not contain a very industrious population. It had no manufactures except that of Ale—Windsor Soap had retired to Staines. Few of the community were wealthy, but most of them took life easily, and enjoyed themselves with a good deal of heartiness in their own fashion. There was always some gala to relieve the monotony of the provincial existence—a race, a revel, a review. I think the bells were always ringing. There were about twenty royal birthdays in a year—and the bells pealed out their 'triple bob-majors' from morn to dewy eve. On all these rejoicing days there were what we called illuminations. A ragged boy or two would carry about illumination candlesticks—such a candlestick being a lump of clay with a hole in it—and these elegant light-bearers were stuck in the windows, and their thin candles flamed away for an hour or so, till they guttered out. The illumination, however, was useful as well as pleasant, for the few public lamps gave small light; and then on the gala nights the maid with a lantern, who ordinarily went before her

mistress to the card-party, saved her labour. I think these clay candlesticks and that lantern are passed away. The town-guns, which duly emulated the bells, are gone also, I suppose, in this business-like age. I loved the bells, as I loved the chimes. It was the dream of youth, perhaps, but they had a charm for me which is also amongst the obsolete. The daily 'toll' of St. George's Chapel, which 'toll'd in' few worshippers, was a pleasant sound, which came over the ear soothingly. In London, the chimes and the church-bells arrest no passer-by. A worthy magnate of Paternoster Row used to say that he never heard Saint Paul's bell, though it rang out daily. I have heard it, but I never heeded it. Not so my native bells:—

Sabbath bells! ye duly chime
 For worship, over hill and lea;
 I think that once ye peal'd that time
 In tones that went more cheerfully.
 Speak ye not now of formal kneelings,
 Cold hearts, dull voices, souls asleep?
 Mourn ye not now for bygone feelings,
 For zeal to praise, for penitence to weep?
 Matins' bell, how deeply booming
 Thy summons to the passing crowd!
 I see the vast cathedral looming,
 Its cross in sun, its dome in cloud:
 Fills not the temple with those feet,
 Those thousand feet, that onward race?—
 The choir hath room; six paupers meet
 The solitary clerks in God's deserted place.
 Holiday bells! ye rarely sing
 Of gladness in the labourer's way,
 And say that man may rest, and fling
 His cares behind him for a day.
 I hear not now your call to Maying,
 Ye shout not out the Whitsun-time;
 'The merry bells'—'tis an old saying,
 Belied by your unpractis'd, dissonant chime.
 Sabbath bells, and matins' bell,
 And bell that tolls for earth to earth,
 And holiday bells—I miss your spell,
 The spell that gave your sounds a worth:

I heard ye speak of Faith and Love,—
 Of Hope ye spake to hearts in sorrow,—
 Your mirth seem'd echoed from above—
 When will to-day's dull bells ring in a happier morrow?

The out-door amusements of the Borough were not of a very varied character. 'The horses' came sometimes; and with the horses came the shilling lottery, in which there were real prizes of cotton gowns and legs of mutton—and, more attractive still,

'Where silver spoons are won, and rings of gold.'

I just remember to have seen a mountebank—a real mountebank, who set up his bills,

'That promised cure
 Of ague or the toothache,'

amidst jokes and compliments, which would go farther to cure some diseases than the gravity of the whole College of Physicians. Where is the mountebank gone? We must now take the physic without the jest. Newspapers have annihilated the mountebank. Advertisements usurp the office of the Merry Andrew. And thus we flee to 'Parr's Life Pills.'

The Bull-bait was a ceremony at which I was never permitted to assist; but I have seen the bull, as Gay saw him,—and I have seen his companion, too:

'With slow and solemn air,
 Led by the nostril, walks the muzzled bear;
 Behind him moves, majestically dull,
 The pride of Hockley-hole, the surly bull.'

The bear and the monkey were harmless exhibitions in my day. I never asked, as Slender asked, 'Why do the dogs bark so? be there bears in the town?' But I have heard the bull-dogs bark. The fashion of cruelty was changed. I should have thought that the bull-bait had gone out at the beginning of the century, had I not before me a correspondence between the Under-Secretary of State and our Mayor, by which it seems that the sport was fashionable as late as 1818. Lord Sidmouth had heard of 'an intention



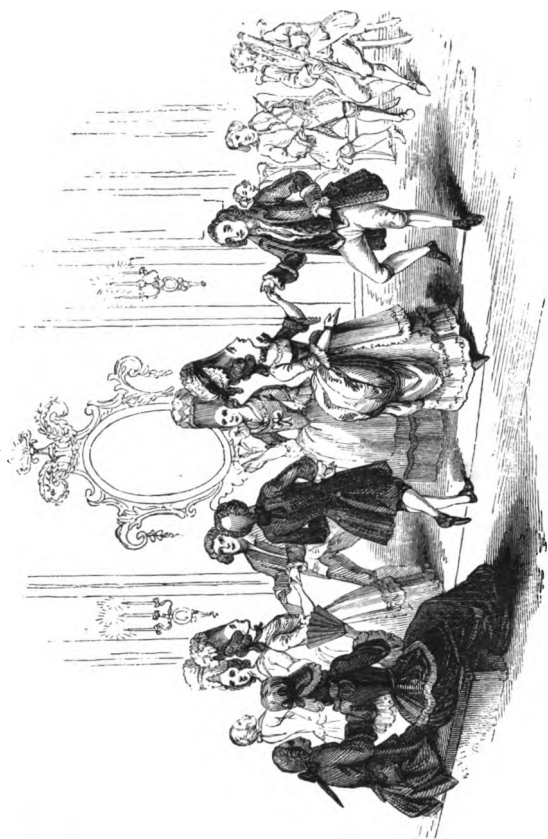
Bear-ward.—Hogarth.

to create a mob at Windsor, on Monday next, under colour of a wish to ascertain the life of His Majesty,* and he called upon the mayor to quell any disturbance. It was not the first plot that Lord Sidmouth had sniffed from afar. The Mayor had no apprehension of such a mob; but he writes: 'It is said that a bull is to be baited on Monday next, in a piece of ground adjoining this town—a brutal amusement which has too frequently occurred at this place, which I would gladly suppress were I possessed of sufficient authority;' and he adds, 'whenever a bull-bait has taken place here, a very large portion of the military have joined in the amusement.' Alas! for authority. The law then permitted bull-baits. Windham had defended them. But if they had been illegal, authority was very weak to encounter them. The municipality had four watchmen and three constables to keep the peace. The peace was very often broken—and so were the lamps. A burgess brought home his bride; and marrow-bones and cleavers rent the

* George III. was dead to the external world.

air till midnight came and the watchman had a drunken delinquent in the cage. A cobbler beat his wife,—and the clangour of pots and the yells of women frightened the street from its propriety—the offender was rough-musicked. An informer—a name in those days as odious as a tax-gatherer—was hunted through the alleys, and tarred and feathered. Bread riots were not uncommon, and great, then, was the terror of the bakers. The good people, with the most benevolent intentions which nobody could blame, set about augmenting the inflictions of scarcity in the true old fashion. The moment that high prices of bread arrived, we were accustomed to take to a gratuitous distribution of bread;—we established soup kitchens and rice coppers, that a few clamorous mouths might be fed, at the expense of a still higher increase upon prices, to be paid by the many who were not clamorous. We did upon a small scale what the government of Paris does upon a large scale. I don't know how we managed to live through all these troubles of high prices, and excessive taxes—the exciseman poking his nose into every shop—and Napoleon at Boulogne, ready to harry the 'nation of shopkeepers.' But we did get on, and were merry nevertheless; and 'the tight little island' was encored at every public dinner; and there were whist clubs and assemblies, as if there were no want and no fear in the land. About these assemblies, I have a grievance of which I must speak fully.

The Country-Dance is obsolete, as obsolete as the dancing costume of the last century. I shall never forget the night when the seeds of one of the great revolutions of these times were sown in our assembly-room. Thirty couples stood up for the accustomed country-dance. Louisa W. had to call, and I was her delighted partner. The eager hands were clapped, the discordant strings were screwing up into tune, and we were debating with the venerable leader of our band the relative merits of 'The Honeymoon' and 'Speed the Plough.' With the most correct taste, Louisa had decided for 'right and left,' in preference to 'la poussette,'—we were ready. At that



A Ball.—From the Frontispiece to Thompson's Country Dances, 1778.—P. 466.

instant a handsome officer of dragoons—the coxcomb—advanced to Louisa, and in the most humble tone—the puppy—ventured to recommend a quadrille. Louisa's eyes consulted mine, and I boldly consulted the leader. I knew the range of his acquirements, and I was safe;—we went down with 'The Honeymoon;' but the evil was rooted.

Within a fortnight there was a special meeting of the subscribers to our assembly-room to discuss an important question. It was convened at the particular desire of a lady of fashion, so called, who had become a temporary resident amongst us. I knew there was mischief brooding, and, as I was petulant, I stayed away. Poor Kit, the master of our band, and his faithful followers, were dismissed after thirty years' duteous service; and four fiddlers, from Paine's, I think they said, came from London by the coach—fine powdered fellows in silk stockings; but no more to compare with Kit's crew for strength and untiring execution than a Jew's harp to a hand-organ. But they were wonderfully applauded; and Louisa, seeing that I would not sanction them, recommended me to take lessons. I would as soon have learned to speak High Dutch.

From that time I was left to solitude, when the ball-room was lighted up with twenty candles in tin sconces. I sat at home, and mused mournfully; and thus I mused: 'Departed visions of the dear country-dances of my boyhood, to what foreign land are ye fled? Are ye gone to thrust out waltzes from Germany, or fandangos from Spain—are ye departed to unnationalise other feet, as the detestable quadrilles have corrupted ours? Ah, no—ye have not the subtlety of your hateful rival—like your unhappy countrymen, ye must give place to the cuckoo tribe who drive you from your nests. It is only ten years since I learned to dance at school, and my knowledge has become obsolete. To outlive one's old friends is the most painful feeling in earth's pilgrimage—and I have done this long before I am grown gray. "The Jolly Young Waterman," and "Money Musk," and "The Devil among the Tailors," and "Drops of Brandy," and "Off She Goes," and "Mother

Casey," and "Molly put the Kettle on," and "Lady Montgomery," are with the things before the flood—and I will weep for them. But I will never abandon my early faith for "La Poule," or "L'Été," or—Psha! I hate myself for knowing even these execrable names. I will practise, even with my own chairs, "up the middle and down again, swing corners, hands four, and right and left," till the gout overtakes me—but I will never prostitute myself to "dos-à-dos, chassée en avant, balancer, tourner les dames," or "chaine-Anglaise,"—no, not if I could secure myself an exemption from crutches till my eightieth winter. I have too much patriotism in my blood. But I may live to see a reaction—quadrilles may descend to the kitchen;—and so "Sir Roger de Coverley" may again find his true place in the drawing-room.'

It may seem a strange transition from Balls to Beggary, but we never passed into the Town Hall, our great Assembly-room, without looking upon the Stocks, which seemed a part of the grandeur of that edifice. So, also, stood the Stocks at the east entrance of St. George's Chapel, and might appear to the profane a part of its ceremonial—more for show than use. I believe the Town Stocks were rarely employed in my time. The Pillory had hung up in the Market House untouched for half a century. We had, on the whole, a mild administration of the laws. Vagrants, if very rude and dirty, were threatened with the Stocks, and then *passed* on. The Stocks were an item of the obsolete in my native town. It was not so in other parishes, where the Stocks were occasionally useful, as in the time of Canning's knife-grinder.

'Story, God bless you, I have none to tell, sir!
Only last night, a drinking at the Chequers,
Justice Oldmixon set me in the parish
Stocks for a vagrant.'

To this ingenious machine were the labourers of England once doomed, if they dared to venture out of their own parish, even when in their own parish they, the natives, had eaten up all the parish could give them. Other

humane devices to prevent the desire for wandering, and to reconcile them to starvation at home, were derived from the good old times of branding and whipping. By degrees, however, these exertions to prevent the labourers wandering were in great part superseded by the merciful consideration of the old poor-law functionaries, who employed a great portion of their time, and a larger portion of the public money, in carrying the labourers about from one end of the kingdom to the other. In this gentle manner we—a courtly race—dealt with our Rogues and Vagabonds. There was perpetually a nice journey for the constable to pass a pauper to his settlement, and so the Stocks became obsolete. I believe the Stocks of my ancient parish are rooted up. I think I missed them lately, when I looked upon the changed haunts. ‘I went to the place of my birth, and I said, The friends of my childhood, where are they?’

We had a very social place of confinement, which was doubtless more agreeable than the Stocks, called a ‘Cage.’ It was not deemed any great disgrace to be put in the Cage. The Jail was a serious thing, which looked like the law being in earnest. But the Cage was a small room with a barred window looking into the street; and there the pleasantest conversation went on between the lively people within, and their friends outside. The birds of the Cage soon fluttered again in the free air—for they were petty delinquents, such as those whom women swore their lives against. The Jail was for the higher offenders—the starving beggar who stole a penny loaf, or the maid-of-all-work whose box was searched for her mistress’s thimble. For these there was the terror of the Quarter Sessions. That, indeed, was a solemn affair; and sometimes there were terrible punishments in store for the convicted. A public Whipping at the Cart’s Tail was the mode in which Justice now and then proclaimed that she did not sleep. It was a brutal spectacle. I think it generally provoked a great deal of hissing when the jailer (for he was the executioner) struck hard, and some mirth when he touched the culprit’s back lightly. I suppose the

Cart's Tail is gone to rest, with the Stocks and the Pillory. Our system of secondary punishments may be an imperfect one; but it is a vast improvement upon the disgusting exhibitions which were not uncommon forty years ago.

My boyish acquaintance with the course of justice in our Borough gave me a very insufficient notion of the fearful things that were going on then in the land, under the highest sanction of the law. I knew that the King, on certain days, went to London to receive 'the Recorder's Report;' but I had a very vague notion of what that meant. People talked then of hanging as a thing of course, and absolutely necessary for the good of society. I have a dim recollection of a man who had been in our prison being hanged at Reading; and of being told that our jailer's daughter had been to see the execution, and to receive the benefit of the dead man's warm hand being passed over her throat for the cure of a wen. Such stories, true or not, came over the childish ear with few terrors. For the child, the abstract idea of death has no fears; and 'sad tales best for winter' are pleasurable around the warm hearth. I heard many such tales. I knew of haunted houses. I knew where a witch lived; and why the horse-shoe was nailed over the cottage door. But I had never been face to face with the horrible. I was about ten years old, when a servant with a led pony came to fetch me from school. We had to cross Hounslow Heath by the Staines Road. He proposed to show me something I should like to see. Gracious Heaven! Close by a clump of firs was a gibbet, on which two bodies hung in chains. The crow perched on a skull. The rags fluttered, and the irons rattled, in the breeze. My heart sickened. The first day of my holidays brought no pleasure. It perhaps brought some wisdom. My hatred of the atrocious criminal laws of those times was fixed for life. Some years later I was present at a trial when a culprit, about to be sentenced, was told, 'kneel down, and pray your Clergy.' The solemn mockery! And these relics of barbarism are gone—The Gibbet, and the Neck-Verse.

But I must get away from these painful remembrances, to look at my borough, and its dignitaries, under more pleasurable aspects. The mayor's feast. There really was nothing vulgarly ostentatious or contemptible in the mayor's feast—no gilt coach, no tawdry chariots, no men in armour. There was no interruption to the daily business of life. The chief magistrate gave a good English dinner in his hall, and he asked the best people he could find amongst his neighbours. Patriotic toasts were drunk; and old English glees and catches, recommending 'wine, rosy wine'—and vowing, 'we'll turn the night into the day,' were enthusiastically applauded. These exhortations to good fellowship were scarcely necessary; but they were pleasant. With the exception of the two members for the borough, who always said the same things from year to year, the company were not disturbed by any oratory. They went on carousing till midnight; and no one rose to depart except one alderman, who had filled his pocket with peaches, and was anxious to present them to his helpmate. The mayor's feast is gone.

That peach-abstracting alderman, I recollect distinctly, had very large pockets, with great flaps, on the outside of his coat. He was not a genteel alderman; and his costume was unvarying. Most others, in those times, had best clothes, and everyday clothes. Let me endeavour to jot down a few items of the obsolete costumes of my town.

I have a very obscure remembrance of two cocked-hats. Of course I do not include the beadle's cocked-hat—may it live a thousand years! Under the cocked-hat was necessarily the wig! The cocked-hat and wig generally came out in the afternoon. In the morning a red cap covered the bald pate. Down to comparatively recent times there was a lady—but she was a foreigner—who walked abroad with her powdered *toupet* under her silken *calèche*. The cocked-hat soon passed out of my view, except in one remarkable instance.

It was at the beginning of the century that a notable personage was to be daily gazed at amongst the sights of

Windsor. One of my earliest recollections is of this singular man. I see him now, as he appeared to my childish curiosity, mysteriously creeping by the first light of a winter's morning through the great gate of the lower ward of the castle into the narrow back streets of the town. He then constantly wore a large cloak, called a roquelaure, beneath which appeared a pair of thin legs encased in dirty silk stockings. If the morning was wet, his cloak was not his only protection from the weather. He had a formidable umbrella; and, what was most wonderful, he stalked along upon pattens. Often have I watched him creeping out of his solitary house in the castle, and most carefully locking doors behind him, as he went on his morning errands. There he lived, in one of the houses of the Military Knights, then called Poor Knights, to which body he belonged: it was the house next to the governor's. No human being, it was imagined, had for some years entered that house except its eccentric possessor. The wise man, he held, was his own best assistant; and so he dispensed with all domestic service. In the morning, then, he duly went forth to make his frugal purchases for the day—a faggot, a candle, a small loaf, perhaps a herring. All luxuries, whether of meat, or tea, or sugar, or butter, were renounced. He had objects to be attained, and for whose attainment he laboured for years, which required money. His income in money, derived from his office, besides his house, was about sixty pounds. Regular attendance upon the service of St. George's Chapel was his duty; and the long blue mantle which the Poor Knights wore covered the faded finery beneath, as well as the roquelaure which hid the loaf and the farthing candle. But when the offices of the morning had been performed, and the sun, perchance, shone brightly, out came another creature. Wherever crowds were assembled,—wherever royalty was to be looked upon, and the sounds of military music summoned the fair ones of Windsor and Eton to the gay parade,—there was Sir John Dinely. The roquelaure was cast aside, and then were disclosed the treasures which

it concealed—the embroidered coat, the silk-flowered waistcoat, the nether garments of faded velvet, carefully meeting the dirty silk stockings, which terminated in the half-polished shoe surmounted by the dingy silver buckle. The old wig, on great occasions, was newly powdered, and the best cocked-hat was brought forth with a tarnished lace edging. There walked, then, on Windsor Terrace, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, one who might have sat for the costume of the days of George II. All other days were to him as nothing. He had dreams of ancient genealogies; and of alliances still subsisting between himself and the first families of the land; and of mansions described in Nash's 'History of Worcestershire,' with marble halls and 'superb gates;' and of possessions that ought to be his own; which would place him upon an equality with the noblest and the wealthiest. A little money to be expended in law proceedings was to make these dreams realities. That money was to be obtained through a wife. To secure for himself a wife was the business of his existence; to display himself properly where women 'most do congregate' was the object of his savings; to be constantly in the public eye was his glory and his hope. The man had not a particle of levity in these proceedings. His face had a grave and intellectual character; his deportment was staid and dignified. He had a wonderful discrimination in avoiding the tittering girls with whose faces he was familiar. But perchance some buxom matron, or timid maiden who had seen him for the first time, gazed upon the apparition with surprise and curiosity: he approached. With the air of one bred in courts, he made his most profound bow; and taking a printed paper from his pocket, reverently presented his Advertisement 'For a Wife,' and then withdrew.*

Was this man mad? He had a monomania certainly; but in other matters he was the shrewdest man I ever knew. He was reserved and sarcastic to most persons,—

* See Portrait, p. 388.

for too frequently was he insulted ; but to those who were kind to him he displayed no common mind. My childish curiosity about this singular personage became, as I grew older, mixed with a respectful and higher interest. He was unfortunate. His misfortunes were inscribed in no less terrible a page than that book over which many a boy has wept and trembled—the Newgate Calendar. In one of these volumes, I had read that, on the 17th of January, 1741, a dismal tragedy had occurred at Bristol. There were two brothers who had become enemies on account of the entail of property. The elder was Sir John Dinely Goodyere, baronet ; the younger, Samuel Dinely Goodyere, a captain in the navy, commanding the ‘ Ruby ’ ship of war. The two brothers had long ceased to meet ; but a common friend, at the request of the younger, brought them together. They dined at his house ; they exchanged professions of brotherly love. When they separated, the baronet had to pass alone over College Green, at Bristol. He was encountered by six sailors, with the captain of the ‘ Ruby ’ at their head. He was seized, gagged, carried to a boat, and thence to the ship—and he was strangled. The vengeance of the law was speedy. The vessel was detained upon suspicion ; the crime was fully proved ; and the inhuman brother and two of his confederates were hanged within two months. The Sir John Dinely of Windsor was the son of the murderer. That the poor man was perfectly familiar with all the circumstances of this tragedy, there can be no doubt ; and I have often thought that, shut up in his lonely house, with the horrible recollections of the past lingering about him, it was wonderful that he was not altogether mad. The family estates which might have come to Captain Goodyere were most probably forfeited to the Crown. The poor advertiser for a wife alludes to this circumstance in one of his bills : —‘ Pray, my young charmers, give me a fair hearing ; do not let your avaricious guardians unjustly fright you *with a false account of a forfeiture.*’ But the estates were not to be recovered ; and the penalty for the crime in the second

generation was mitigated, I hope, by the innocent delusions by which the son of the guilty brother was buoyed up, even to his dying hour. Sir John Dinely was one morning missing from his due attendance upon the service of St. George's Chapel. His door was broken open. His house was without furniture except a table and a chair or two. The passage by which it was entered was a receptacle for coals. The sitting-room was strewn with printing-types—for he used to print his own bills after the rudest fashion; in a small room beyond was stretched the poor man upon a pallet-bed. He had studied physic; and he had prescribed for himself not injudiciously, having a few medicines always at hand. He lingered a few days, and then—all the dream was over.

But this is an episode. Pattens? Yes, my poor old baronet wore pattens,—but certainly they formed no part of other male costume. Yet the patten was not an obsolete thing then. How often in the gray morning have I been awake by the clink of the patten upon the pavement! It told of a wet day; and I turned again to my pillow. The charwoman going to her work—the milkwoman fresh from the fields—the early housewife intent upon marketings—all wore pattens. Young ladies going to school wore pattens—and ran races in pattens.

‘The patten now supports each frugal dame,
Which from the blue-eyed Patty takes the name.’

I doubt Gay's etymology; but I have no doubt of the virtues of the patten. With the riding-hood and the patten how independent was the lady, without dragging about the great clumsy umbrella of oilskin that belonged to those days! The patten is gone, and so is the riding-hood. We cannot tell the story now of ‘Little Red Riding-hood’ without a glossarial note. What does a child now understand by ‘One, two, buckle my shoe?’ The age of shoe-buckles, as everybody knows, went out when the French Revolution was consummated by the appearance of shoe-strings at Versailles. Yet I have seen shoe-buckles. Such

practical anachronisms only occur in country towns. The queue long survived the cocked-hat and the buckle. 'Play out the play. I have much to say on behalf of that' queue.

Thirty years ago there were only two queues extant in my town. I sighed, then, as I thought how many of my old queue-bearing friends, who used to smile when I, wanton rogue, climbed up their chairs and reverently laid their queues upon their powdered shoulders, how many had passed into 'the oblivious grave! Even now, I sometimes see their venerable shades in my day-dreams, with their ample rouleaus of curls around their temples, and their neatly twisted queues behind their backs. They passed away, and were succeeded by a cropped and degenerate race.

I just remember the 'decline and fall' of the empire of queues. Faithful companions, duteous followers, ye succumbed to the tyranny of the greatest of Tories. The fatal tax upon hair-powder exterminated you. Slowly and sadly did ye decay; and one by one did ye depart from the cares of this transitory life! Frail and innocent beings, ye were untimely plucked, and cut off from your abiding-place and your inheritance! In a few short years I saw ye almost all yield to the avarice of those who should have cherished you. They cast you off in the hollowness of their friendship; and they went shorn into the world, bleak, honourless, comfortless, queueless.

I could never entirely tolerate the volunteer mania; for it completed the destruction of the persecuted queues. There was only one officer in our corps, of glorious memory, who had the magnanimity to bear his queue without a blush. Methought it gave him the look of those who knew 'how fields were won.' But there was a corporal who did not partake of my reverential feelings. As the veteran marched in advance of the battalion, the mischievous subaltern (he was a tailor) would perk the queue in his lieutenant's face. I could have brought the corporal to a court-martial; it was flat mutiny, and unparalleled in the annals of warfare.

There were four queues in my native place who survived the oppression of the times ; but they owed their existence to a rare combination of favourable circumstances. They were trimmed and watered by an ancient professor of queues, who had commenced his practice not very many years after the disunion of the two illustrious occupations of barbery and surgery. The professor was necessary to the wearer of the queues ; and the four queues were a quiet and obedient family, that he loved with a complete and unmingled devotion. He was not a vulgar and everyday professor. He had saved a small fortune in the happier times of curls and toupets, and he despised the ordinary clients of the later days of unpowdered pertness. He received an annual guinea from each of his queue-bearers ; and he resigned himself exclusively to the cultivation of this his small estate in tail. The hour of his morning visit was an hour of happiness : it was a full hour. It was his to spread the flowing hair over the ample shoulders ; to smooth out the broad black ribbon, which he carefully renewed when its lustre was sullied ; to gather up the scattered locks into a solid girth of leather ; and then to bind them fast roundly and taperingly, till his power should again give them a temporary freedom. Poor Fuller ! he sang ' Time has not thinned,' with an exquisite tremulousness ; and he told the scandal of his profession with a sly and solemn air, which at once bespoke his discretion and his sincerity. He loved his queue-bearers alike, and he left to each of them a ring.

Top-boots. I am by no means sure that top-boots are obsolete in my native town. Egalité Orleans and the Prince of Wales are painted in top-boots ; and the tops lasted till Wellingtons and trousers drove them out. Why should I particularise the top-boot wearers ? Yet I must say that I never saw the Queen's apothecary in the streets—he never rode—without his top-boots and spenser. It was a sober costume, and grave burgesses wore them, unless they were soberer still in long drab gaiters. The top-boots of those days were not the smart, white-topped boots that

one now sees at the hunting 'meet.' They were of a respectable brown, varying from the colour of ochre to that of liquorice. Before they were extinct they had a race of rivalry to run with the Hessians. These indeed were jaunty things. How bright was their polish! how splendid were their tassels! And then the spur on the heel! That spur had nothing to do with horses. It was, however, a dangerous thing for a stranger civilian to wear that spur at Windsor. He stalked into St. George's Chapel. No matter what the choristers were chanting—in an instant the spur was detected; and the distracted man, as he left the nave, after a little gazing at the painted windows, was surrounded by a bevy of white surplices demanding spur-money. The custom was as old as the days of James I.: 'Be sure your silver spurs clog your heels, and then the boys will swarm about you like so many white butterflies; when you, in the open quire, shall draw forth a perfumed embroidered purse, and quoit silver into the boys' hands.*' Has the custom gone out as well as the spurs? The law, perhaps, is not dead, and may revive when men shall resume distinctions in dress, and not hide their legs in trews, and their bodies in sacks. I hope they will not revive. The distinctions were too often false—and it is as well they are gone.

There was no distinction in those days between frock-coats and dress-coats. The morning coat and the evening were the same. But for the evening party, the unspeakable gentility of the knee-breeches, and the silk stocking! The varieties, too, of that portion of the dress. The white kerseymere, and the white stocking; the black, and the black. Then young men were really dressed, and were fit for ladies' society. I have said something of Assemblies. They were the great occasions for display of the tight pump and the spotless hose. But they did not come often. There were no improvised dances on the carpet in those times. There was the genteel tea-party; when the half-pay colonel ordered a shilling's worth of biscuits, and a quarter of a

* Dekker: 'Gull's Hornbook,' c. 4.

pound of sixteen shilling hyson. There was the vulgar tea and supper, at which there was much mirth, and some gambling at 'speculation' and 'commerce.' At neither was there music; except some unhappy young lady, just come out, was asked by Mamma to play 'The Battle of Prague.' Oh that 'Battle of Prague!' The 'cries of the wounded,' expressed by the harpsichord, were nothing to the groans of the listeners to its discordance. The singing too,—but why should I quarrel with that, when I recollect 'Ye banks and braes of bonnie Doon,' which brought tears into my eyes, and love into my heart?

I remember a good deal of foolery in those days; with much cordiality. We were not made unsocial by pretences to wisdom. We might not be very wise. I am sure we were not. We had a good deal of old superstition lingering about us. We looked rather pale when we saw a winding-sheet in the candle. We did not know that a time would come when the old candles would be obsolete, and wicks would be made that would weave no winding-sheets. When a coal flew out of the fire, we examined whether it were a purse or a coffin. We made no talk of gas in the coal, for we knew nothing about it. We showed each other the gifts on our nails; and it was pretty to look in the tea-cup and see by the grounds that a stranger was coming,—at which Emily — blushed. After supper we broke the merry-thought, and had some sixteenth-century joke—softened, of course—which went with the mystical bone's name. I believe I have heard a very sensible matron confidently observe, at a christening dinner, that the dear little thing was thriving on its bit of roast pig. All this is gone, no doubt. I am not sure that we are wiser or better now. I almost believe that the polite ladies who mentioned 'Old Scratch,' or 'Old Harry,' without emotion, were not bad Christians after all.

I think the dumb-waiter may be counted amongst our obsolete items. It belonged to a time when there were fewer domestic servants, who now represent the existence of many artificial wants. The dumb-waiter was a conve-

nient piece of furniture. The husband could froth up the wife's glass of ale, and hand the cruets, without any abatement of dignity, or any outstretching of the arm. I cleave enough to the obsolete to believe that our present perpetual 'waiting' is the bane of modern sociability. I want to help my fair neighbour to wine, and I resent the intrusion of the footman. And yet I must bear with this mal-administration to my dinner wants—for if I should come back to the old times, I should come back to some matters for which the age is too 'picked.' I should come back—not perhaps to the family in the sanded kitchen—but to the parlour for the week-day, and to the drawing-room for Sundays. I should not expect wine as a matter of every-day occurrence. I should have the 'one solid dish' for 'the week-day's meal,' and the 'added pudding' for 'the Lord's.' I should have mince-pies and beef at Christmas, as of old; but I might be compelled to eat fummery on Midlent Sunday, and my pancakes would be limited to Shrove Tuesday, to be tossed in the pan with ceremonies that are quite as well obsolete. It might be better if society had not grown too luxurious in some of these matters. But it is no part of my creed to go back: and so we must deal with progress as we find it.

The manners and material things of the dining-room are capricious. Let us get into the kitchen.

Item: The Tinder-box.

When I was young, the process of obtaining fire, in every house in England, with few exceptions, was as rude, as laborious, and as uncertain, as the effort of the Indian to produce a flame by the friction of two dry sticks.

The night-lamp and the rushlight were for the comparatively luxurious. In the bedrooms of the cottager, the artisan, and the small tradesman, the infant at its mother's side too often awoke, like Milton's Nightingale, 'darkling,' but that nocturnal note was something different from 'harmonious numbers.' The mother was soon on her feet; the friendly tinder-box was duly sought. Click, click, click; not a spark tells upon the sullen blackness. More

rapidly does the flint ply the sympathetic steel. The room is bright with the radiant shower. But the child, familiar enough with the operation, is impatient at its tediousness, and shouts till the mother is frantic. At length one lucky spark does its office—the tinder is alight. Now for the match. It will not burn. A gentle breath is wafted into the murky box; the face that leans over the tinder is in a glow. Another match, and another, and another. They are 'all damp. The toil-worn father 'swears a prayer or two;' the baby is inexorable; and the misery is only ended when the good man has gone to the street door, and after long shivering, has obtained a light from the watchman.

The tinder-box and the steel had nothing peculiar. The tinman made the one as he made the saucepan, with hammer and shears; the other was forged at the great metal factories of Sheffield and Birmingham; and happy was it for the purchaser if it were something better than a rude piece of iron, very uncomfortable to grasp. The nearest chalk-quarry supplied the flint. The domestic manufacture of the tinder was a serious affair. At due seasons, and very often if the premises were damp, a stifling smell rose from the kitchen, which to those who were not intimate with the process, suggested doubts whether the house were not on fire. The best linen rag was periodically burnt, and its ashes deposited in the tinman's box, pressed down with a close-fitting lid, upon which the flint and steel reposed. The match was chiefly an article of itinerant traffic. The chandler's shop was almost ashamed of it. The mendicant was the universal match-seller. The girl who led the blind beggar had invariably a bundle of matches. In the day they were vendors of matches—in the evening manufacturers. On the floor of the hovel sit two or three squalid children, splitting deal with a common knife. The matron is watching a pipkin upon a slow fire. The fumes which it gives forth are blinding as the brimstone is liquefying. Little bundles of split deal are ready to be dipped, three or four at a time. When the pennyworth of brimstone is used

up, when the capital is exhausted, the night's labour is over. In the summer, the manufacture is suspended, or conducted upon fraudulent principles. Fire is then needless; so delusive matches must be produced—wet splints dipped in powdered sulphur. They will never burn, but they will do to sell to the unwary maid-of-all-work.

About twenty years ago chemistry discovered that the tinder-box might be abolished. But chemistry set about its function with especial reference to the wants and the means of the rich few. In the same way the first printed books were designed to have a great resemblance to manuscripts, and those of the wealthy class were alone looked to as the purchasers of the skilful imitations. The first chemical light-producer was a complex and ornamental casket, sold at a guinea. In a year or so there were pretty portable cases of a phial and matches, which enthusiastic young housekeepers regarded as the cheapest of all treasures at five shillings. By-and-by the light-box was sold as low as a shilling. The fire revolution was slowly approaching. The old dynasty of the tinder-box maintained its predominance for a short while in kitchen and garret, in farm-house and cottage. At length some bold adventurer saw that the new chemical discovery might be employed for the production of a large article of trade—that matches, in themselves the vehicles of fire without aid of spark and tinder, might be manufactured upon the factory system—that the humblest in the land might have a new and indispensable comfort at the very lowest rate of cheapness. When chemistry saw that phosphorus, having an affinity for oxygen at the lowest temperature, would ignite upon slight friction,—and, so ignited, would ignite sulphur, which required a much higher temperature to become inflammable, thus making the phosphorus do the work of the old tinder with far greater certainty; or when chemistry found that chlorate of potash, by slight friction, might be exploded so as to produce combustion—a blessing was bestowed upon society that can scarcely be measured by those who have had no former knowledge of the miseries and privations of the

tinder-box. The penny box of Lucifers, or Congreves, or by whatever name called, is a real triumph of science, and an advance in civilisation.

Item: the Pewter Plate.

In Chop-houses in the City the pewter plate is a luxury. In 1512, the Earl and Countess of Northumberland used wooden trenchers, except when pewter plates were 'an ornamental addition to their table on great holidays.'* I remember pewter plates in many kitchens, ranged in shining rows. They were a great nuisance in my father's kitchen, for a day in each week was devoted to their scouring, and they were never used. I think they would have been scoured out of existence, had not a fire luckily taken place, and melted them all. But the dinner-service of Delft was not then a cheap thing. The yellow-white plate had not then been superseded by the well-known willow pattern, which is now common in every cottage. What a blessing Wedgwood was to his country! Let any housewife now consider what her existence would be without her crockery. I will not grieve over the pewter plate.

Item: the Jack and Weight.

Did any of the present generation ever see a great leaden or iron weight slowly travelling down the outer wall of a house—perhaps with a pear-tree blossoming by its side? That weight was the power that moved the jack, that moved the chain, that moved the spit, that moved the sirloin, within. It was always travelling on a Sunday. The smoke-jack of aristocratic houses gave no outward demonstration of its work. The common jack was for the plebeians. But there was dignity in that symbol of what was going on in the kitchen. It said that the joint had not been ignobly sent to the bakehouse. It said something, too, of the great mechanical capabilities of a scientific age. The age of turnspits was passed. But lo! mechanism now applies itself to the diffusion of comfort;

* 'Northumberland Household Book,' preface, p. xv.

and a little instrument, called a bottle-jack, turns the great unwieldy monster, with its wheels, and its chain, and its fly, and its weight travelling down the wall, out of every kitchen.

Item : the Bellows.

‘Gently stir, and blow the fire,
Lay the mutton down to roast.’

What a machine was the bellows ! It was always at work. You heard it in the morning, as you were dressing. You heard it when the fire was low, and the dinner-hour was at hand. You heard it, most especially, in the dim twilight hour, when the kettle was on the hob, and Susan had put on her clean apron, and drowsily puffed, and gazed into the grate, as the coals began to glow beneath the music of her bellows. It was not an occasional friend, but it was ever a constant companion to the fender on which Susan rested her worsted-stockinged feet. What innovations have driven out the bellows ? In those days there was a bundle of green sticks called a kindler, which no power but that of the bellows could make burn. There were no boilers then which yield warm water without any trouble. Everything, too, in the days of the bellows, was to be forced to the boiling-point in the rude cookery. The notion of cookery excluded any of those foreign devices which required a slow heat. But very few higher things were then left to nature. No process could be perfect without perpetual interference with ordinary physical powers. There was no ‘*laissez faire*’ in the cabinet ; and why in the kitchen ? The bellows was an emblem of the State, that was always making a great noise to stimulate society to the white heat of prosperity. But the State, like the bellows, sometimes put out the fire ; and the fire always burnt dully after the stimulus.

Item : the Sand-box.

Did Goldsmith see ‘the nicely sanded floor’ in England ? At the end of the seventeenth century it was not common in the midland counties. Henry Teonge, who came from

Warwickshire, thus writes in his Diary, about Deal: 'The other thing which was strange to me was, that in all places else wherever I yet was, the chiefest care of the neat housewife was to keep the rooms clean from all manner of dust, by sweeping, washing, and rubbing them. But here, clean contrary; for having first swept them clean, they then strewed them all over with sand, yea, their very best chambers.* I never saw the sanded floor in our 'best chambers,'—for then the carpet luxury had crept in. But the delight of the presiding goddess of the kitchen in her sanded paradise! When the sand first was strewed it was not very agreeable—for the sandman, who duly travelled with his cart from house to house, sometimes delivered it rather wet. But it *was* strewed—and the bellows-quickenened fire soon dried it. Day by day it was sifted, when the cooking toils were over. And then, what lady's bower could be so perfect! The shutters were closed; the twinkling candle was lighted; the pewter and the brass glistened; the cat purred; the thread-paper was brought out; and the tidy lass in the stuff gown, who thought her wages of six pounds 'riches fineless,' was as happy—I hope she was happier—than the modern 'professed cook,' who stipulates for twenty-five pounds a year and a kitchen-maid, and puts on her silk gown when the dessert is gone in.

I think there was not much reading in that 'nicely-sanded' kitchen, although books were accessible. The honest occupant had her own favourite books—but they were few, and not costly. I should like now to have a complete collection of such as I remember to have seen;—for Time, which has made them obsolete, has given them a factitious value. They were what we term 'Chap-Books.' Susan had a considerable collection of them in her box. There was 'The History of Valentine and Orson;—' 'The Seven Champions of Christendom;—' and 'The History of the London 'Prentice.' That London

* Diary of Henry Teonge, p. 10.

'Prentice, who was called 'Aurelius,' went to Turkey, destroyed two lions that were prepared to devour him, and married the Emperor's daughter. I see him now, as he is represented in the surprising woodcut, thrusting his hand down one lion's throat, while the other is howling on his back. 'The History of the Lancashire Witches' was there—real witches who rode on winds; and there, too, 'The History of Mother Shipton.' 'Jack the Giant-Killer' was undoubtedly in Susan's collection, and so 'Fortunatus.' But the book on which my early friend most pored was the 'Fortune Book,' which told young men and maids their fortune by drawing cards, and also the signification of moles, and the interpretation of dreams. They are gone—all.

My native town had a very considerable collection of Almshouses. I was fond of talking to some of the old women who dwelt in them; for they were cleanly and gossiping crones—upon the whole contented with their lot. One of them had a wonderful cat, which had outlived all other cats, having been preserved by the kindness of a predecessor, who had also an equally kind predecessor. The cat was endowed by an old maid with a shilling a week, and there was a corporate trustee. Pope's line was no mere imagination:—

'Die, and endow a college or a cat.'

To take care of this cat with nine lives was pleasant occupation. But the greater part of the Alms-women were employed at the Spinning-wheel. There was a spinning charity in the borough,—a bequest in times before Arkwright; and it was the duty of an officer of the corporation to buy flax, and give out flax to be spun, and pay the spinners week by week, and have the flax woven into sheets, which were distributed to poor people according to their deserts. What records of changes are our old charities! How many obsolete bequests to companies and corporations, which time has put aside; and which have, in our enlightened metropolis at least, resolved

themselves into the husks of 'Epicurus' sty!' I suppose my old Spinners are gone.

If the Spinning-wheel remains, under the protection of 'vested interests,' the Hour Glass, by which the old spinner used to measure out her little day, is gone. Time has broken his own emblem. But the moral of the pretty antique hour-meter remains, in spite of electric telegraphs. One generation succeeds another. Dynasties perish. Manners change. Be the glass turned once in an hour, or once in a century, the sand is always running out, and always heaping up. To-day is the child of yesterday.

THE FIRST STEP INTO THE WORLD.

In the early Spring of 1812, I stepped for a month or two out of the little world in which I had been living, to come face to face with great public things. I had a friend who was the editor of two daily newspapers, a morning and an evening. What a wonderful man I thought him! I see him now, as I often saw him, sitting in his back office, in a dingy dressing-gown and unshorn beard, dashing off his leader for the evening paper. At two o'clock he dressed, and he kindly took the youth from the country with him for a walk through the Strand, and along the Mall in the Park. The Park was a queer unfashioned place then, with a long dirty pond where Charles II. fed his ducks—no plantations—no gravelled walks—no gas-lights. But we walked happily enough; and my kind friend told funny Irish stories, and notable anecdotes of Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Ponsonby, with whom he boasted an intimacy. Yet, of the real life about him he knew very little, although he was the editor of two daily papers. To edit a paper then was not very difficult. Many of the thousand complicated social and commercial questions, that have grown up during our long Peace, were then scarcely known. Parliamentary Reform was considered a dream. If the war was blamed, no one could uphold Napoleon. The tone of the paper was settled by the tone of the party. There were very rarely expresses from great provincial towns—and their local intelligence was mostly left to their own journals. Intercourse with foreign States was almost impossible, except through the Government messengers; and they went and came at the cost of several hundred pounds a journey. My good friend's intellect was not greatly

tasked. When we had taken our walk, he had a comfortable dinner; drank a bottle of port, sometimes two; had a nap in his chair undisturbed by the hackney-coaches in the Strand; at nine o'clock, strolled down to the House to know what was going on; wrote his morning leader; and went to bed in very decent time.

I was to have a short training for the still easier life of a country editor, by a month or two in 'The Gallery.' The first day I went down was a terrible trial of endurance. There was a call of the House; and it was absolutely necessary for the reporters to go in before the general public. There was no accommodation whatever for their admission, and no facilities for their work. It was all crush. At these calls the Strangers' Gallery was locked when the Speaker went to prayers, and all further ingress was prohibited. At twelve, then, I was in the gallery or its lobby; and I stayed there till four o'clock next morning. It was to me a wonderful scene, and I had no desire to leave it. At that call of the House, there were all the great ones of the day—how few have not obeyed a higher call!—Abbott, Speaker; Gibbs, Attorney-General; Brougham; Burdett; Canning; Castlereagh; Croker; Grattan; Horner; Palmerston; Peel; Perceval; Ponsonby; Romilly; Sir W. Scott; Sheridan; Tierney; Whitbread; Wilberforce. There were illustrious names called in that February, 1812. I take down 'Hansard,' and I look to see the sort of things I heard debated in that 'Tenth Session of the fourth Parliament of the United Kingdom.' How obsolete some of the opinions read now! What antiquated states of society they represented! Is it a Parliament of the Regency, or a Parliament of some undated period of 'Once upon a Time?' Take a specimen or two.

The nightly watch of the Metropolis.—There had been murders in London, by which two whole families had been completely exterminated; and Mr. Secretary Ryder moved for a committee to inquire into the state of the nightly watch. Romilly asked where was the daily watch,

and whether all the precautions of the nightly watch would provide a remedy against the daring highway robberies committed in the open day?

Death Penalties.—Romilly withdrew his bill for the amendment of the criminal laws, with one exception. He brought in a bill to repeal the Act of Elizabeth, under which soldiers and sailors found begging were punishable with death. But the legislature restored the balance in this session, by hastily passing a bill which made frame-breaking a capital crime, instead of being a transportable offence.

Flogging in the Army.—‘With respect to the man who had been spoken of, he might have died after receiving two hundred and twenty-four lashes, but they could not be the cause of his death.’

By way of illustration of the condition of society in this year 1812, I open ‘The Annual Register,’ and in ‘The Chronicle’ under the date January 1, I find it recorded that the body of John Williams, who had committed one of the family murders referred to in Parliament, and who had died by his own hand in prison, was placed on a platform six feet high, having on ‘a clean white shirt, very neatly frilled.’ The maul and chisel with which he committed the murders were placed on the side of the head. And thus, in solemn procession, with headboroughs and constables to the number of three hundred, the car was drawn to the house in Rateliff Highway, where one murder was committed; and the body was turned so that the face of the dead man might be ‘directly opposite the scene of atrocity.’ Again the procession moved, and again it stopped for another quarter of an hour before the house where another murder had been committed. It finally proceeded to the New Road, where the body was cast into a hole, ‘amidst the acclamations of thousands of spectators.’ Here is a pleasant exhibition to begin the year with, for the edification of a London that in every other mode of instruction was utterly neglected. Page after page of the ‘Chronicle’ furnishes details of robbery and murder, riot

and slaughter. The terrors of fanaticism were added to those of natural fear. On the 20th of February a dissenting minister appeared in a boat on the Thames, dressed in a white linen robe, with his long hair flowing over his shoulders, and proclaimed that the Seven Vials of the Book of Revelations were to be poured out upon the city of London. Crime seemed to have lost all dread of the law. On the 22nd of March the Judge at the Assize at Reading, coming out of the church in grand procession, was hustled and robbed of his gold watch and seals. The punishments of the law were horribly unequal. A farmer near Ashford, finding some boys trespassing in his orchard, strikes one of them over the head with a stake. The boy kneels and begs for mercy; but the farmer repeats the blow, and fractures the skull. It was sworn on the defence 'that the skull was so remarkably thin that a very slight blow would fracture it;' and so, upon this scientific evidence, the farmer was fined a shilling and discharged. Hanging was so common that it became a joke amongst the people. A police-officer saw two men upon a wall in the Hampstead Road, and shortly after one of the two was hanging to a lamp-post. The short man had turned off the tall man; they having, after an agreeable day of drinking and gambling, tossed up which should hang the other. Amidst all this lawlessness, the Prince Regent gave the most magnificent entertainment on record at Carlton House. To crown the horrors of the spring of 1812, Mr. Perceval was assassinated on the 11th of May, in the lobby of the House of Commons. I was for two months in London in a time that is now fearful to read about. But the world went on as usual then; and looking back upon my own limited experience, I do not recollect a merrier season than that first year of the Regency.

That session was one of high political importance:—The settlement of the Royal Household; Orders in Council; Catholic Emancipation; the War in Spain. There was great eloquence in the Commons—the grace of Canning—the vehemence of Brougham—Romilly, grave and earnest

—Perceval, mild and persuasive—the silver voice of Wilberforce—the manly ardour of Whitbread. But what a corps of Reporters! There was ability enough amongst them; but nobody seemed to feel that he was engaged in a grave duty. They were a merry set in the Exchequer coffee-house. A head peeps in, ‘Now, Flaherty.’ ‘Who’s up?’ ‘Creevey.’ ‘Oh, I know all he can say—no hurry. You were observing’—‘Waiter, another bottle of that old port.’

And then the Saturday evening oratory of the same set that I had met in the gallery, at the ‘Eccentrics,’ in May’s Buildings. There is a great gathering. A charge against Mr. Howley has been announced at a previous meeting. The charge comes on. Mr. Grant brings the charge—that Mr. Howley is a poet. Mr. Davis is called as witness. He proves that Mr. Howley was an elegiac poet; that he was a lyric poet,—that he wrote an Ode to Winter, beginning ‘All hail;’ that he had answered an advertisement to the effect that ‘any person competent to write ballads of a superior description, and in serious style, might hear of occupation;’—that he was a descriptive poet, and had written a tender piece, commencing with

‘How beautiful the country doth appear,
At this time of the year!’

Then various wits spoke for and against the charge; and Mr. Sheil gave an oration upon poetry in general; concluding with a peroration touching the magnificent calm of the poet while there is war, and want, and tumult, and sorrow all around him. ‘Oh! there is an earthquake under his feet, and the soil heaves with a tremulous impatience, and the seas rush from their beds, and the air is darkened, and the vulture screams, and the palaces and the temples rock with a wide-spreading and all-involving fury; but he stands erect amidst the convulsion, creeps out of the ruins, sings his song of gladness in the desert, and comes once more into the breeze and the sunshine.’ And then Mr. Quin, the editor of ‘The Day,’ rushes from his

seat to embrace Mr. Sheil, and says—‘Sir, I honour ye. Dine with me to-morrow.’

Then, during that brief intimacy with the renowned and the influential, I had the free admissions of the theatres. What a privilege was that! Drury was in ashes. But there was Covent Garden, with the two Kembles and Young. O’Neil and Kean were not as yet. But there were Munden, and Fawcett, and Emery.

They tell me there are no actors now. Perhaps not. I cannot judge. There are some things that look to me ever fresh, as of old—the face of nature, the smile of love, the gush of poetry, the wisdom above all wisdom. But for meaner things, surely

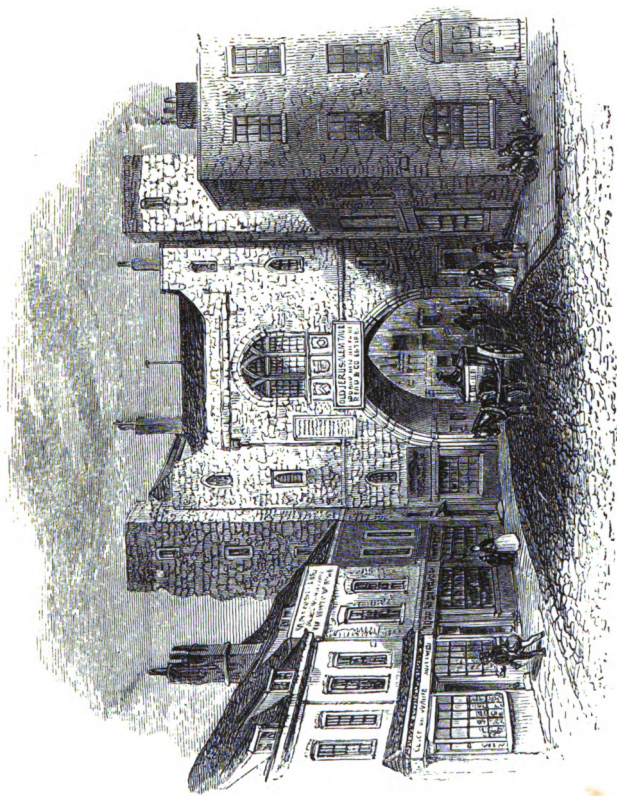
‘Life’s enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.’

And with this brief experience I went back to my native town, to be one of those who bore the honoured name of ‘best public instructor.’ My range of pupils was very limited. I had little honour in my vocation, and less profit. The world in which I lived was a very singular one. There was the Court atmosphere; and the Collegiate atmosphere; and the Corporate atmosphere—all very much opposed to a free inflation of that air which was called the Liberty of the Press. Yet I was resolved to be independent, and I was unaffectedly patriotic. I hated Napoleon with a true English fervour. That covered some of my sins in not having an undoubting faith in the rulers of the day, with their *ex-officio* informations. I had some compliments to soothe me. Sir William Herschel came to thank me for telling the people that they were blockheads for attributing the high floods to him;—and the vicar once quoted my leader in a fast-day sermon.

SAINT JOHN'S GATE.

WHEN Samuel Johnson first saw St. John's Gate, he 'beheld it with reverence,' as he subsequently told Boswell. But Boswell gives his own interpretation of the cause of this reverence. St. John's Gate, he says, was the place where the 'Gentleman's Magazine' was originally printed: and he adds, 'I suppose, indeed, that every young author has had the same kind of feeling for the magazine or periodical publication which has first entertained him.' He continues with happy naïveté, 'I, myself, recollect such impressions from the "Scots' Magazine."' Mr. Croker, in his valuable notes to Boswell's 'Johnson,' has a very rational doubt of the correctness of this explanation: 'If, as Mr. Boswell supposes, Johnson looked at St. John's Gate as the printing-office of Cave, surely a less emphatical term than *reverence* would have been more just. The "Gentleman's Magazine" had been, at this time, but six years before the public, and its contents were, until Johnson himself contributed to improve it, entitled to anything rather than *reverence*; but it is more probable that Johnson's *reverence* was excited by the recollections connected with the ancient gate itself, the last relic of the once extensive and magnificent priory of the heroic knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, suppressed at the dissolution, and destroyed by successive dilapidations.'

More than a century is passed away since Johnson, from whatever motive, beheld with reverence the old gate of the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. There it still remains, in a quarter of the town little visited, with scarcely another relic of antiquity immediately about it. Extensive improvements are going forward in its neighbourhood; and



St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, 1841.—P. 514.

it may probably be one day swept away with as ruthless a hand as that of the Protector Somerset, who blew up the stately buildings of the hospital to procure materials for his own palace in the Strand. May it be preserved from the most complete of all destroyers—the building speculator! It has, to me, a double interest. It is the representative of the days of chivalrous enthusiasm on the one hand, and of popular improvement on the other. The Order, which dates from the days of Godfrey of Bouillon, has perished, even in our own time—an anomaly in the age up to which it had survived. The general desire for knowledge, which gave birth to the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine,’ is an increasing power, and one which depends upon no splendid endowments and no stately mansions for its maintenance and ornament. Cave, the printer, was the accidental successor of the Prior of the Hospital of St. John. But, representing the freedom of public opinion, he was the natural successor of the despotic power of a secret society. At any rate, the accident invests St. John’s Gate with an interest which would not otherwise belong to it; and in its double character we may not be ashamed to behold it ‘with reverence.’

It was in 1841 that I first saw St. John’s Gate. Turning out of St. John’s Street to enter St. John’s Lane—a narrow street which runs obliquely from that wide thoroughfare—the Gate presented itself to view, completely closing the road, and leaving a passage into St. John’s Square only through the archway. The large masses of stone of which the gate is composed were then much decayed; but the groined arch had recently been restored. A huge board which surmounted the archway informed the few passers-by that they might here solace themselves with the hospitalities of the ‘Jerusalem Tavern;’ and, lest they might dread to be subjected to any of the original notions of abstinence which a pilgrim might once have been expected to bring within these walls, a window of a house or bulk on the eastern side of the gateway displayed all the attractions of bottles with golden labels of ‘Cordial Gin,’ ‘Pine-apple Rum,’ and ‘Real Cognac.’ Passing under the arch, I per-

ceived that the modern *hospitium* ran through the eastern side of the gateway, and connected with premises at either end. Invited 'To the Parlour,' I entered. A comfortable room was that parlour, with its tables chequered with many a liquor-stain; and genius had here its due honours, for Dr. Johnson's favourite seat was carefully pointed out. But the tavern had then higher attractions than its parlour fireside with Dr. Johnson's corner: it had a 'Grand Hall,' where the 'Knights of Jerusalem' still assembled in solemn conclave every Monday evening. It was long before I ventured to ask whether any uninitiated eyes might see that Grand Hall; but I did take courage, and most obligingly was I conducted to it. I ascended the eastern turret by a broad staircase (but certainly not one of the date of the original building), and was soon in the central room of the Gateway. It was a fine lofty room, and if there were few remains of ancient magnificence—no elaborate carvings, no quaint inscriptions, nor 'storied windows,'—the spirit of the past had been evoked from the ruins of the great military order, to confer dignities and splendours on the peaceful burghers who were wont here to congregate. Banners, gaudy with gold and vermillion, floated upon the walls; and, if the actual 'armoury of the invincible knights' were wanting, there were two or three cuirasses which looked as grim and awful as any

'Bruised arms hung up for monuments.'

Nor were the fine arts absent from the decoration of that apartment. Sculpture had here given us a coloured effigy of some redoubted Hospitaller; and Painting had lovingly united under the same ceiling the stern countenance of Prior Dockwra, the builder of the Gate, and the sleek and benign likenesses of the worshipful founders of the modern order. History records not their exploits, and I shall be silent as to their names. They were quiet lawgivers, and not rampaging warriors. They had done the wise thing which poetry abhors—changed 'swords for ledgers.' Instead of secret oaths and terrible mysteries, they invited

all men to enter their community at the small price of two-pence each night. Instead of vain covenants to drink nothing but water, and rejoice in a crust of mouldy bread, the visitor might call for anything for which he had the means of payment, even to the delicacies of kidneys, tripe, and Welch rabbits. The edicts of this happy brotherhood were inscribed in letters of gold for all men to read; and the virtuous regard which they displayed for the morals of their community presented a striking contrast to the reputed excesses of the military orders. The code had only four articles, and one of them was especially directed against the singing of improper songs. Here, then, was mirth without licentiousness, ambition without violence, power without oppression. When the Grand Master ascended the throne which was here erected, as the best eminence to which a modern Knight of Jerusalem might aspire, wearing his robes of state, and surrounded by his great commanders, also in their 'weeds of peace,' no clangour of trumpets rent the air; but the mahogany tables were drummed upon by a hundred ungauntleted hands, and a gentle cloud of incense arose from the pipes which sent forth their perfumes from every mouth. Would I had partaken of that inspiration! After the third hour the dimensions of the 'Grand Hall' of the Jerusalem Tavern would have expanded into the form and proportions of the 'Great Hall' of the Priory of St. John. The smoke-coloured ceiling would have lifted itself up into a groined roof, glorious with the heraldry of many a Crusader or Knight of Rhodes. The drowsy echoes of 'tol de rol' or 'derry down' would have melted into solemn strains of impassioned devotion; and the story, three times told, how Jenkins beat his wife and was taken to the police-station, would have slid into a soft tale of a Troubadour discovering his ladye-love who had followed him through Palestine as a pretty page. Slowly, but surely, the green coats and the blue, the butcher's frock and the grocer's apron, would have become shadowed into as many black robes; and in the very height of my ecstasy the white cross would have grown on every

man's breast out of its symbolical red field. Then the 'order, order' of the chairman would have become a battle-cry; the knock of his hammer would have been the sound of the distant culverin; the hiccups of the far-gone sipper of treble-X ale would have represented the groans of the wounded. I should have fallen asleep, and have dreamt a much more vivid picture of the ancient glories of the Priory of St. John of Jerusalem than can be presented with the aid of obscure chronicles and perishing fragments—the things which the antiquary digs up, and, when he has brought them to light in his erudite pages, has the satisfaction to be called 'one of those industrious who are only re-burying the dead.'*

I went again to Saint John's Gate in 1853. I turned down the quiet unchanged street—what a contrast to the associations of modern Smithfield!—and there stood the Gate, apparently unchanged also. But there was a change. The east side of the arch was covered with a mighty oil-painting, of canvas large enough to have satisfied poor Haydon, or any other enthusiastic professor of 'high art'—the subject, Knights of Saint John going forth to a Tournament. The old 'Parlour' looked invitingly; and I could not resist the temptation of the inviter. There was a change, however, in its decorations. On one side of the room was a great collection of frowning portraits of the Grand Masters of the Order, cut out of one of its famous histories; on the other, a series of some eighty pages of a modern work on the antiquities of the Gate, framed page by page. The spirit of Cave had descended upon the present landlord of the Tavern—and he had compiled this 'History of the Priory and Gate of St. John of Jerusalem,' and illustrated it with really beautiful engravings. Honoured be the labours of the landlord of St. John's Gate! There were other intellectual attractions in the old Parlour—Hogarth's 'Industry and Idleness'—portraits of Johnson, and Garrick, and Cave—Prior Dockwra's signature in lithograph,—and

* Horace Walpole (of Gough) in a letter to Cole, 1773.

notices of 'A Discussion Class.' I again went up to 'the Grand Hall.' The portraits of the modern Knights of St. John had vanished. I fear they had not maintained the fame of their great predecessors, Fulk de Villaret, or Pierre d'Aubusson. Other changes had taken place in twelve years. The Knights of St. John had given place to a Musical Society, whose amateur concerts delighted Clerkenwell twice a week. I thought much of these changes, and went home, musing.

The first star was out in heaven, as I sat that evening in my quiet study, and called up the memories that were associated with St. John's Gate. I possess a silver tankard, with St. John's Gate and 'E. C.' engraven on its side. Good old Cave, according to Sir John Hawkins, 'that he



Cave.

might avoid the suspicion of pride in setting up an equipage, displayed to the world the source of his affluence, by a representation of St. John's Gate, instead of his arms, on

the door panels,' and 'causing it to be engraven on all his plate.' The old-fashioned cup was filled for me that summer evening. The 'twilight interim' gradually slid into darkness—and my musings grew dream-like.

I sat in the chair of the Discussion Class in the parlour of the Jerusalem Tavern. We are bold in dreams. I had no fear that I might offend the honourable company by my presumption. Prior Dockwra was there; but he seemed to me somewhat edged out of the places of honour by rather obscure personages. There was Mr. Moses Browne, 'in a cloud of tobacco-smoke,' who obtained Cave's great fifty-pound prize for a poem in the 'Gentleman's Magazine;' and who subsequently wrote 'Sunday Thoughts,' upon which Johnson observed 'he had a great mind to write and publish "Monday Thoughts." ' There was Mr. John Duick, who not only used his pen as one of Cave's poets, but was a 'pen-cutter' in Clerkenwell. Mr. Webb, from Mr. Watkins's Academy in Spital Square, tendered a new enigma to 'a man of large stature, not only tall but bulky.' Another large man 'in a loose horseman's coat, and a great bushy uncombed wig,' said 'Pooh' to the enigma. I rather trembled before that large man, whom I well knew. But a jaunty little man, with a comical face, said, 'Let him earn his half-crown—he was call-boy when I played the "Mock Doctor" up-stairs.' And so I was president of a club at which the Prior of St. John's, Edward Cave, Samuel Johnson, and David Garrick were the choice spirits. I must be the Boswell of the party.

The Prior.—Hush! I hear the lutes and dulcimers preluding for even-song.

Johnson.—Your reverence mistakes. How dare you laugh, Davy! I have learnt something of music since I asked Burney, when I had the dropsy in my legs, to teach me the gamut. I know those mechanics up-stairs are playing a Sonata of Beethoven.

Garrick.—We have all learnt something since then. I now know that I didn't act Shakspeare, when I made the side-boxes weep; and that Mr. Phelps does play Shakspeare

to the apprentices at Sadler's Wells. But I am afraid of this levelling. What have artisans to do with Beethoven? and why do they want Shakspeare's *Lear*? Tate's brought down the pit; and *you* boasted that '*Cordelia*, from the time of Tate, always retired with victory and felicity.'

Johnson.—Sir, I talked some nonsense then, and wrote some too. Why do you talk nonsense now when you know better? It is in an age when there is great general ignorance, and partial refinement, that botchers like Tate dare to meddle with such as Shakspeare. Those violins that we hear up-stairs tell us that taste is spreading, and knowledge too.

Cave.—We sold fifteen thousand of the '*Gentleman's Magazine*' when you, Sir, wrote the *Debates*. The number is not so large now.

Johnson.—No, Sir, how should it be? Your *Magazine* was then to the public what newspapers have become since—but how wretchedly we supplied the want!

Cave.—Ah, Mr. Johnson—I beg pardon, Doctor—they have never anything in their newspapers equal to your *Debates*, 'for felicities of expression, for the structure of sentences, happy at once for point, dignity, and elegance.' My worthy successor in the *Magazine* truly described *your Debates*.

Johnson.—Don't make me wretched, Mr. Cave. I was penitent, even in the body, for imposing on the world, in making arguments and conjuring up answers for speakers in Parliament. There was no truth in them, Sir. But now—Prior, may I trouble you for '*The Times*.' Look here, Mr. Cave. There are twenty columns that would fill two of your *Magazines*, and not a word there printed was spoken at this time yesterday; and the reporters have invented no lies, as we invented.

Garrick.—But they polish a bit—and put in what looks to me very like the prompter's work. And after all, there is not much eloquence.

Johnson.—Sir, a great, earnest, busy people have no time for eloquence. They want facts, Sir, facts. The reporters

may properly polish. There is an essential difference between speaking and writing. There are redundancies to prune away—connecting words to supply. They do their work well, those reporters.

Cave.—Don't you think, Sir, that Parliament was right to prevent us publishing the debates?

Johnson.—Wise, as the Stuarts were; but not wise for the time when you kept the press going over the way. The days of public opinion were coming quickly; and to imagine five hundred gentlemen sitting at Westminster to legislate in secret, when a whole nation was beginning to read, is to imagine a ship becalmed in a North-wester. The safety-valves of opinion have been opened—never again to be closed.

Cave.—But the Magazine, Sir. It lives yet. It ought to sell thousands, where I sold hundreds.

Johnson.—That is, that caviare should sell better than potatoes. The people want good things, but they want cheap things. They want things of universal application. They don't want your pretty verses to Pastora—your charades, your rebuses, your tombstone learning, your dissertations on a Roman urn, by Dr. Pegge. They want what they can understand and take an interest in. Sir, if I had the power to act in this world, I would set up a new halfpenny magazine, and you should print it,—and we would sell millions, Sir, millions.

Cave.—You would not lower yourself to the multitude?

Johnson.—Lower myself? I would try to elevate myself. Do you think that if I had known my trade, we should have sold only five hundred of the 'Rambler?' I was speaking to the multitude then. But I could not speak to the middle and working classes as writers speak now. I talked grand, Sir; and the few readers said, 'great moralist,' and went to sleep.

Garrick.—Would you write a novel, now?

Johnson.—Yes, Sir. Do you think that I couldn't have written a novel if I had chosen to descend from what I thought my dignity; when you, and I, and Savage, knew

the town and all its queer ways as well as Defoe, and better than Smollett? Goldy wrote a novel. It is the most popular book in the language. And chiefly because Goldy wrote that book, for which I got him a hundred pounds, his peach-blossom coat is immortal. His Life—

Garrick.—I don't observe that any one has written my Life since Tom Davies. I cannot help feeling—

Johnson.—‘As much feeling as Punch’—forgive me, Davy. Poor Goldsmith's vanity was mortified enough in this wicked world; but he has his consolations now. Here he comes, as gay as ever,—with Eliza on one arm, and Fanny on the other.

The tobacco-smoke vanished—and with it, Mr. Moses Browne. My place was changed. I sat at a tea-table with the ladies opposite me.

Madame D'Arblay.—Is your tea agreeable, Doctor?

Johnson.—Excellent, Madam. Vastly good. Cheaper than ever, I hear.

Mrs. Carter.—Everything is cheap, Sir—even books are cheap. I saw my ‘Epictetus’ on a stall for half-a-crown. The subscription price was a guinea.

Goldsmith.—Yes; there is an American Life of me for a shilling.

Johnson.—And a far better English Life. That generous ‘Biography’ by Mr. Forster is worth something, after the ‘natural shocks that flesh is heir to.’

Goldsmith.—I like the shilling popularity.

Johnson.—If you were to write another book as good as ‘The Vicar,’ you would rather grumble to find the people of a mighty continent, who speak and read our noble English, contributing nothing to your reward for the inestimable pleasure which you supply them. But, in truth, the robbery has become mutual; hence, your shilling popularity.

Goldsmith.—I don't understand political economy.

Johnson.—Nor did I, when I wrote the last four lines of your ‘Deserted Village’—‘Teach him,’—Yes,—

'That trade's empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.'

Goldsmith.—Excellent!

Johnson.—No, Sir; there is no such thing in civilisation as 'self-dependent power.' The savage might have been self-dependent before Columbus; but wherever the needle travels, trade makes even the savage an exchanger. I may have imagined a period when our quays and our docks shall be desolate and ruinous as the choked-up harbours of Carthage or Venice. It was a dream. 'Trade's proud empire' is going forward to such a conquest as the world never yet saw. Its empire is built upon knowledge. The ends of the earth are brought together by science. Some of the words which you and I wrote, my friend, have winged their way to mighty regions, which were being discovered when you and I talked commonplaces about 'trade's proud empire.' I was angry with Maurice Morgann, for writing of Shakspeare—'When the hand of Time shall have brushed off his present editors and commentators, the Apalachian mountains, the banks of the Ohio, and the plains of Scioto, shall resound with the accents of this barbarian.*' He was right, Sir. We shall all—if there is anything good in us—live with the extension of our language; and that extension is the work of trade—Another cup, if you please, Fanny.

Madame D'Arblay.—Do you think they are reading 'Camilla' on the banks of the Ohio, Doctor?

Goldsmith.—Decidedly so—a nation that adores the ladies.

Johnson.—Don't flatter, Goldy; for to flatter is to degrade. Fanny, much as I love her, described an ephemeral life, which she had never very accurately observed herself. Nothing can last in literature that is built upon fashions and individualities. Your Doctor Primrose is a representative of humanity, whether in villages of Yorkshire or the new cities of the plains of Scioto.

* Essay on the Character of Falstaff.

Goldsmith.—Your 'London' was a picture of a particular period and locality, yet that lives.

Johnson.—It was historically true, Sir; and the local did not forget the universal. I don't want men to write as if they had no dwelling-place and no social habits. But they must feel there is a wider circle than home. All literature is tending to the universal, and the free intercourse of nations will confirm that tendency.

Suddenly the tea vanished. I was alone in the parlour with that man of large stature, Edward Cave; and there he sat opposite me, with his own silver tankard between us.

Cave.—My service to you, Sir. I help myself freely out of my household cup. You value this?

Dreamer.—Certainly. I bought it from a descendant of yours, who was not so well off as you could have wished; and I cherish it as a memorial of one who had worked well for popular literature.

Cave.—Ay—those mills! Johnson said of me,—'The fortune he left behind him, though large, had been yet larger, had he not rashly and wantonly impaired it by innumerable projects, of which I know not that ever one succeeded.'—For a kind man he judged hardly.

Dreamer.—You are past minding those losses now, Mr. Cave. You did some good in the world, and that is better worth looking back upon, be we dead or alive, than large estates.

Cave.—True, Sir. You think I did some good?

Dreamer.—Every man who, in his generation, honestly does his best to advance the intelligence, and promote the happiness, of his countrymen, does some good.

Cave.—I am glad you think so. Since my ashes rested in Rugby churchyard, I have heard many opinions against making knowledge too common.

Dreamer.—Heed them not,—they will vanish.

Mr. Cave vanished—for I heard a railway-whistle.

Bless me! I've been dozing.

Again I dozed; and the same scene, with other anachro-

nisms, such as the waking mind never heaps together, came before me.

The Prior had shifted his place. He was in the Presidential chair. The room was filled with unsubstantial figures, in dresses in which the white cross mingled with the laced waistcoat and the full-bottomed wig, but nothing determinate. A tall man emerged from the gloom, with the gold surtout over the glittering mail. The Prior frowned.

Prior.—Edward Seymour, what do you here? Are you come to triumph over the ruin you have made? Get you back to Somerset House, and see what you will find of the grandeur of which you stripped my poor Priory. There is not a stone of your Palace left. I have my Gate still.

Somerset.—Peace, good Prior. Your House fell, because it was out of harmony with the age. Mine fell, for the same cause.

Prior.—Yes. You carted away the stones of my great Bell-tower; but your head soon paid for the spoliation. And then a Queen lived in your Palace, and the Mass was sung 'once more, and there was masque and music, and a stern man had his ears cut off for speaking plain words about 'women actors' there. And then another Queen came, whose husband cared nothing for Mass or Liturgy; and thought the 'women actors' were pleasanter companions than his wife. And then your Palace descended to the hangers-on of St. James's. Behold now—it is gone; and your place of glory is filled with a legion of clerks, who record the gathering of as much tax in one year as would have trebled the revenues of all the Priors and Abbots in the land. Why couldn't you have left us to feed the poor at our gate?

Somerset.—Because you kept the people poor by your luxuries and your alms. I look in upon the clerks of my old palace-ground now and then, and I find them doing better work than they used to do. If they did not, their Somerset House would go too, like mine House, and thine, Prior.

Prior.—You pretended to build schools out of the ruins of our old nests.

Somerset.—Yes, we did something. I wish those who came after us had done as much. We did little enough, I know. We taught some.

Prior.—And hanged many.

Somerset.—Very true. There were two grand instruments of education—the grammar-school and the gallows. But who is this fellow—with his white cravat and black wig?

Prior.—Oh, a neighbour of mine, who comes here sometimes to smoke his pipe—Mr. Aris, late Governor of the House of Correction.

Aris.—A word in your ear, Protector. We are all equal now, and we may as well be sociable.

Somerset.—Sociable! Why, you were denounced in Parliament as a cruel jailer, who whipped and tortured in secret within your strong walls yonder.

Aris.—It was our way, Protector. The soothing system was unknown then. Mr. Hogarth will tell you that we did in the beginning of this century pretty much as his good friends of the Fleet did sixty years before. That's the gentleman, making a sketch of your Highness on his thumb-nail.

Somerset.—Good evening, Mr. Hogarth. I suppose Mr. Aris reformed the Idle Apprentice, and encouraged the Industrious, after your fashion of showing the Lord Mayor's Coach in one picture, and Tyburn in the other.

Hogarth.—No doubt, Protector. It was the old safe rule. Naughty boy, gallows; good boy, riches. But in those times we had not quite so many naughty boys as now. We had our Gin-lanes, where the young and the old soon drank themselves dead; and our Blood-bowl-houses, where murder was the rule. But we had no swarms of little wretches, creeping forth from dirty hovels, and becoming thieves out of the cruel neglect of society. Our prisons were not many; and they were not filled with childish pilferers. Thieving then was a profession; and the infants in the schools of thieving were creditably maintained by the masters of the craft till they were proficient.

Aris.—Why, Mr. Hogarth, you talk like the great moralist who was here just now. A good time, that!

Somerset.—Go on, painter.

Hogarth.—I *was* a great moralist. I painted vice as I saw it. I lived in a state of things in which there was a vast deal of open profligacy, high and low. The laws were cruel, and the people were brutal. Now, all people profess decency—except the poor victims who hide in stinking alleys—neglected and despised. It is not mere poverty that is their bane. They are outside the pale of humanity. They are not received into Brotherhood. How can the children of these haunts do other than find their way into prisons—and find their way out again,—to be again rejected by Society?

Prior.—Had my House been standing, I would have taken the poor creatures in, and fed them.

Hogarth.—There are many houses in the land where the destitute child is clothed and fed, and is better educated than some of his rich neighbours. The country has prisons enough, and workhouses enough. It wants decent dwellings for those who work, and reformatory schools for those who beg and thief.

Somerset.—Decent dwellings! Why, I wander about London, and sometimes in other places, and see more comfortable houses for the citizens, and better furnished, than nobles possessed in my day.

Hogarth.—Oh, yes; such houses pay for building. But the poor man must pay at a double rate, and die of bad air in cellars, and put his children, four in a bed, in vile garrets.

Somerset.—You ought to be working at this day, Mr. Hogarth, to tell the rulers these truths in pictures more eloquent than words.

Hogarth.—There is plenty of eloquence, and no want of picture satire, and other satire, about such things. I have successors. But the rulers seldom do anything now, as you did in the despotic days. When an evil grows enormous it may be swept away. But they never move to prevent the evil. If anything is done, the people do it themselves. There is plenty of good feeling at work—no want of knowledge.

Prior.—What are the preachers about?

Hogarth.—Your reverence must excuse me saying that even in the days of a powerful Church there was more thought of forms than of religion. I painted the 'Sleeping Congregation;' and I painted 'Fanaticism.' Indifference and Credulity were antagonists in my day. Indifference had the worst of the fight, and things seemed mending. But Credulity put on another garb; and we may have—but I forget how near we are to Smithfield.

Somerset.—You seem a good Protestant, Mr. Hogarth.

Hogarth.—I am an Englishman. I am more tolerant of foreigners and friars than when I painted 'Calais Gate;' but when I see old superstitions as rampant as when you took a hand in putting them down, I am apt to say, 'Oh, for an hour of'—I was going to compliment you—but I would rather say, Oh, for an hour of that Protector who, when intolerance put on her face of persecution, said—'The sound of my cannon shall be heard in Rome.'

Somerset.—A vigorous Protector was that brewer of Huntingdon. We have had some talk lately. Falkland and Hampden, he says, are in the New Parliament House; but he, the greatest, has no place. This is a queer generation, Mr. Hogarth—rather timid and servile, I opine.

Hogarth.—Kings—

Aris.—Come, Sir, no sedition.

Hogarth.—Sedition! Is not the name of 'King' to be mentioned without coupling it with sedition? But you are right. You speak from the remembrance of your own dungeons. Things are changed in England, Mr. Aris.

Somerset.—True. I thought my Edward would have changed fear into love. But three centuries were to roll over before that secret of government was understood. Victoria—

Dreamer.—Three cheers!

There was a rattle as of multitudinous applause. Cave's tankard had fallen on the floor;—and I fairly awoke.

THE TAIL-PIECE.

THE last design of Hogarth was a tail-piece to his works. He made an allegory of 'The End.' Time is prostrate on the earth. His scythe is snapped in two; his hour-glass smashed; his will, bequeathing all things to Chaos, is in his palsied hand; the last whiff from his broken pipe curls up into 'Finis.' Around him lie the shoemaker's last; the cobbler's end; a torn purse; a battered crown; a fractured musket; a cracked bell; a worn-out besom; the capital of a column; a broken palette. The landscape is composed of a ruined tower; a tumble-down hovel; a withered tree; and the sign of 'The World's End.' In the distance are a gallows and a foundering ship. Phœbus is falling from his chariot; the moon is darkened.

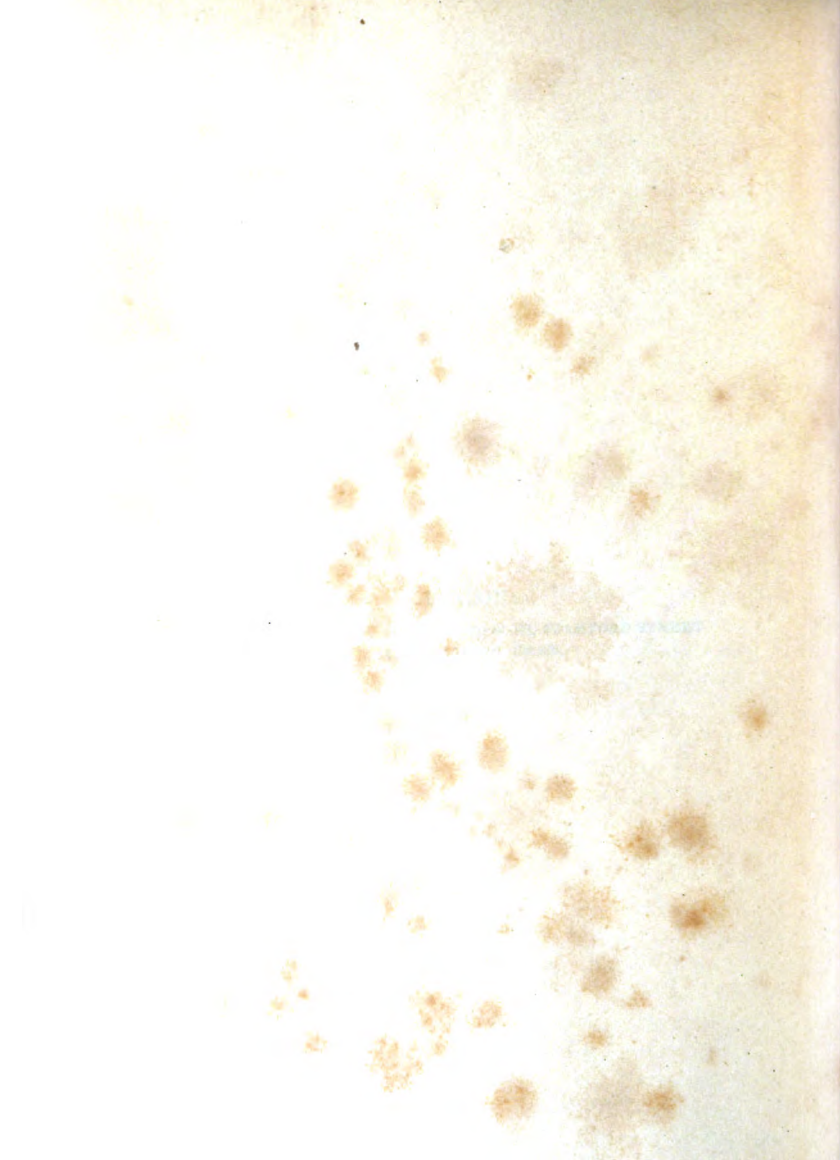
In this emblematic print, while we admire the ingenuity of the artist, we see the limited range of his art. Material objects are poor exponents of abstract ideas. But they may tell something.

It was a fashion of the minor poets of the seventeenth century to write verses which they called 'Advice to a Painter,' or, 'Directions to a Painter.' If I were to give suggestions to a designer for a tail-piece to 'Once upon a Time,' I should say—sketch a *pendant* to Hogarth's 'Finis.' Raise Time into the noblest attitude of Wisdom—one foot on the earth, the other lifted, as if springing to the skies. Let his scythe be in one hand—in the other, the seed which he is beginning to scatter 'broadcast o'er the land.' Let Time be the sower as well as the reaper. Let him outstretch his glorious wings, as he prepares to leave

behind him, in the dimmest distance, the emblems of past ignorance and misrule—the ruined hovel, the rampant gibbet, and the farm-yard in flame. Let him look before him, at the vast school, and the narrow prison; at venerable temples of pure worship, and stately towers of good government. Be there, the Crystal Palace, the National Museum, the Free Library, the Public Park. Let the statues of the Poet and the Philosopher stand in the porticos of the Halls of Commerce. Let the plough and the steam-engine be the companion symbols of Industry. Let the cannon be thrown down at the foot of the printing machine. Let the sun break through the dispersing clouds; and let the rainbow span the farthest hill-tops.

THE END

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